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THE

BRITISH THEATRE;

OR,

A COLLECTION OF PLAYS,

WHICH ARE ACTED AT

THE THEATRES ROYAL,

DRURY LANE, COVENT GARDEN, AND HAYMARKET.

PRINTED UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF THE MANAGERS

FROM THE PROMPT BOOKS,

43011

WITH

BIOGRAPHICAL AND CRITICAL REMARKS,

BY MRS. INCHBALD.

IN TWENTY-FIVE VOLUMES.

VOL. XIX.

EARL OF WARWICK.
RIVALS.
DUENNA.
BELLE'S STRATAGEM.
BOLD STROKE FOR A HUSBAND.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR LONGMAN, HURST, REES, AND ORME,
PATERNOSTER ROW.

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THE

EARL OF WARWICK;

A TRAGEDY,

IN FIVE ACTS;

BY DR. FRANKLIN.

AS PERFORMED AT THE

THEATRE ROYAL, DRURY LANE.

PRINTED UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF THE MANAGERS

FROM THE PROMPT BOOK,

WITH REMARKS

BY MRS. INCHBALD.

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LONDON:
PRINTED BY THOMAS DAVISON, WHITEFRIARS

REMARKS.

THIS is the dramatic history of the Earl of Warwick, whose exploits as a soldier, and intrigues as a politician, obtained him a second title from the populace—a title, at this time, recognised by all Christendom, in the person of another warrior. Warwick was called "The Setter-up and Puller-down of Kings."

By some, this appellation was meant as an honour; by others, as a reproach to Warwick; but as, in the distribution of thrones, he never showed a wish to secure one for himself, it may fairly be supposed that he conscientiously gave the royal sceptre into that hand, which he hoped and believed best could wield it; his latent self-love pointing out to him, alternately, that candidate as most worthy of the crown, who most revered his power and dignity.

In this tragedy, the youthful, gay, and gallant Edward the Fourth, is, for the first and the last time, brought upon the stage in person, though a well-known character, by description, in some of our best English dramas.

Edward is excellently described in the play of "Jane Shore" as her betrayer and doting lover. In

"Richard the Third" he is depicted as a dying king, and the beloved husband of this very Elizabeth, for whom, in this tragedy, he sighs; and whose power over his heart caused the resentment of his friend, the Earl of Warwick; and, of consequence, the loss of his throne till that great man chose to be appeased.

The reader will probably have a much higher respect for the charms of the Lady Elizabeth Grey, here celebrated, and of her whole character, by keeping in his recollection, that she was afterwards the afflicted mother of the two young princes murdered in the Tower, and the mother-in-law of Richmond, afterwards Henry the Seventh.

The famed Margaret of Anjou, wife of Henry the Sixth, here portrayed, was the daughter of René of Anjou, King of Sicily; and, all heroine as she was, in heading whole armies to fight her captive husband's battles, her prowess in the field was far less eminent than that of the female general, her immediate precursor—Joan of Arc, the Maid of Orleans, acted her military feats in the early part of the reign of Henry the Sixth; and Joan's and Margaret's achievements in arms might have taught the Earl of Warwick less vain-glory in his martial deeds.

The character of Margaret is so well drawn in this play, that, by the dignified exertions of Mrs. Yates, who first appeared in the part, the play had a very favourable reception.

A mistake occurred during the rehearsal of this drama, which proves the deception to which dramatic

writers, managers of theatres, and the actors, are frequently liable.—Every one of the before-named experienced persons, who were concerned in the tragedy of the "Earl of Warwick," condoled with Mrs. Yates, before the piece was brought forth, on her having to represent a part in it of such ferocious mind and manners as would infallibly be hateful to every auditor. The event proved otherwise; and Margaret of Anjou was the favourite character of the public, the sole upholder of the play in its long attraction, and obscured, with her brilliancy, both Warwick and the king, although the two most admired actors of the theatre, Holland and Powell, represented those parts.

This tragedy is a translation from the French play of the same name, by the famous De La Harpe, who died since the French revolution. It was first acted in Paris in the year 1764, and was brought on the stage in this country in 1767, by Dr. Thomas Franklin, called the *Grecian*, from his learning.

The original writer did wrong by inventing, but the translator, as an Englishman, has done worse in adopting, an historical falsehood introduced at the catastrophe of this play. The famed Earl of Warwick was slain at the battle of Barnet; which being a circumstance more likely to be forgotten than that Richard the Third was killed in Bosworth field, it ought to have been held peculiarly sacred by the poet, as a recorded truth, which, by fictitious colouring, might easily be effaced from the memory of the young.

To those who love that long-disputed subject of kingly prerogative, and the privileges of the people, some scenes between Edward and the Earl of Warwick may give high amusement; and may possibly fix their wavering opinions, upon whichever side they chance to be inclining.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

KING EDWARD	*Mr. H. Siddons.*
EARL OF WARWICK	*Master Betty.*
SUFFOLK	*Mr. Bartley.*
PEMBROKE	*Mr. Powell.*
MARGARET OF ANJOU	*Mrs. Powell.*
LADY ELIZABETH GREY	*Mrs. H. Siddons.*
LADY CLIFFORD	*Miss Boyce.*

OFFICERS, GUARDS, *&c.*

THE

EARL OF WARWICK.

ACT THE FIRST.

SCENE I.

A Palace.

Enter MARGARET *of* ANJOU *and* LADY CLIFFORD.

Lady C. Thanks, gracious Heaven! my royal mistress smiles;
Unusual gladness sparkles in her eye,
And bids new welcome in the stranger, Joy,
To his new mansion.

Marg. Yes, my faithful Clifford,
Fortune is weary of oppressing me:
Through my dark cloud of grief, a cheerful ray
Of light breaks forth, and gilds the whole horizon.

Lady C. Henry in chains, and Edward on the throne
Of Lancaster; thyself a pris'ner here;
Thy captive son torn from his mother's arms,
And in the tyrant's power; a kingdom lost:
Amidst so many sorrows, what new hope
Has wrought this wond'rous change?

Marg. That, which alone,
In sorrow's bitt'rest hour, can minister
Sweet comfort to the daughters of affliction,
And bid misfortune smile—the hope of vengeance:
Vengeance, benignant patron of distress,
Thee I have oft invoked, propitious now
Thou smil'st upon me; if I do not grasp
The glorious opportunity, henceforth
Indignant frown, and leave me to my fate!
Lady C. Unhappy princess! that deceiver, Hope,
Has often flatter'd, and as oft betray'd thee:
What hast thou gained by all its promises?
What's the reward of all thy toils?
Marg. Edward and Warwick, those detested names.
Too well thou know'st, united to destroy me.
Lady C. That was, indeed, a fatal league.
Marg. But mark me;—
If we could break this adamantine chain,
We might again be free: this mighty warrior,
This dread of kings, th' unconquerable Warwick,
Is plighted to the fair Elizabeth.
Lady C. The Lady Grey, you mean, the beauteous widow,
Whose husband fell in arms for Lancaster?
Marg. The same.—Warwick long has loved—
Lady C. And means to wed her.
Marg. But if I have art,
Or she ambition, that shall never be.
Lady C. Canst thou prevent it?
Marg. Yes, my Clifford,
I shall provide her with a fitter husband,
A nobler far, and worthier of her charms—
Young Edward.——
Lady C. Ha! the king! impossible!
Warwick, ev'n now, commission'd by the state,
To treat with Louis, offers England's throne
To France's daughter, and ere this, perhaps,
Hath sign'd the solemn contract.

Marg. Solemn trifles!
Mere cobweb ties—Love 's a despotic tyrant!
Edward is youthful, gay, and amorous;
His soul is ever open to the lure
Of beauty, and Elizabeth has charms
Might shake a hermit's virtue.
Lady C. Hath he seen
This peerless fair one?
Marg. Yes—by my contrivance,
When last he hunted in the forest, some,
Whom I had planted there, as if by chance
Alone directed, led him cross the lawn
To Grafton: there—even as my soul had wish'd,
Elizabeth surprised
His unsuspecting heart——
Lady C. What followed?
Marg. O!——
He gazed and wonder'd; for a while, his pride
Indignant rose, and struggled with his passion;
But love was soon victorious; and, last night,
The Earl of Suffolk, so my trusty spies
Inform me, was despatch'd, on wings of love,
To plead his master's cause, and offer her
The throne of England.
Lady C. What, if she refuse
The golden bribe?
Marg. No matter: all I wish
Is but to make them foes.—Warwick
Is fiery, and impatient of reproof;
He will not brook a rival in his love,
Though seated on the throne; besides, thou know'st
The haughty earl looks down with scorn on Edward,
As the mere work of his all-powerful hand,
The baby monarch of his own creation.
Lady C. Believe me, madam, Edward still reveres
And loves him; still, as conscious of the debt,
Pays him with trust and confidence; their souls

Are link'd together in the strictest bonds
Of sacred friendship.

Marg. That but serves my cause:
Where ties are close, and interests united,
The slightest injuries are severely felt;
Offended friendship never can forgive.

Lady C. Now the full prospect opens to my view:
I see thy distant aim, and trace the paths
Of vengeance: England will soon be a scene
Of blood and horror: Discord's fatal torch
Once lit up in this devoted land,
What pow'r shall e'er extinguish it? Alas!
I tremble at the consequence.

Marg. And I
Enjoy it: O! 'twill be a noble contest
Of pride 'gainst pride, oppression 'gainst oppression;
Rise but the storm, and let the waves beat high,
The wreck may be our own:—
And see, the king approaches;
This way he passes from the council—Mark
His downcast eye; he is a stricken deer;
He cannot 'scape:
We'll meet and speak to him.

Lady C. What mean you, madam?

Marg. To ask him—what, I know, he will refuse;
That gives me fair pretext to break with him,
And join the man I hate, vindictive Warwick;
But soft—he comes——

Enter KING EDWARD *and an* OFFICER.

King E. Is Suffolk yet returned?
[*To the* OFFICER.

Offi. No, my good liege.

King E. Go, wait and bring him to me; [*Exit.*
I'll to my closet.—Pardon me, fair lady,
I saw you not.

Marg. Perhaps it is beneath

A conqu'ror to look down upon his slave;
But I've a boon to ask.
King E. Whate'er it is,
Within the limits of fair courtesy,
Which honour can bestow, I'll not refuse thee.
Marg. There was a time, when Margaret of Anjou
Would not have deign'd to ask of Edward aught;
Nor was there aught that Edward dared refuse her;
But that is past—great Warwick's arm prevail'd,
And I am now your pris'ner.
King E. Since the hour
When fortune smiled propitious on the cause
Of justice, and gave vict'ry to our arms,
You have been treated with all due respect,
Or your condition, or your sex could claim;
Served like a queen, and lodged within our palace,
Is there aught more you can with reason ask,
Or I, in prudence, grant you?
Marg. Give me back
The liberty I lost—restore my son,
And I may then, perhaps, be reconciled
To an usurper; may withhold my vengeance,
And let thee sit, unpunish'd, on—my throne.
King E. You talk too proudly, madam; but to show you
I cannot fear, you have your liberty.
Letters this morning I received from France,
Have offer'd noble ransom for your person;
Without that ransom (for the soul of Edward
Is far above the sordid lust of gold)
I grant it—from this moment you are free.
But for your son—I cannot part with him.
Marg. I scorn your bounties—scorn your proffer'd freedom!
What 's liberty to me without my child?
But fate will place us soon above thy reach;
Thy short-lived tyranny is almost past;

The storm is gath'ring on thee, and will burst
With tenfold vengeance on thy guilty head.
King E. I am not to be talk'd into submission,
Nor dread the menace of a clam'rous woman.
Marg. Thou may'st have cause to dread a woman's pow'r.
The time may come—mark my prophetic word—
When wayward beauty shall repay with scorn
Thy fruitless vows, and vindicate my wrongs:
The friend thou lean'st on, like a broken reed,
Shall pierce thy side, and fill thy soul with anguish,
Keen as the pangs I feel: York's perjured house
Shall sink to rise no more; and Lancaster,
With added lustre, reassume the throne.
Hear this, and tremble—give me back my son—
Or dread the vengeance of a desp'rate mother. [*Exit.*
King E. Imperious woman! but the voice of wo
Is ever clam'rous: 'tis the privilege,
The charter of affliction, to complain.——
This tardy Suffolk! how I long to know,
Yet dread to hear, my fate! Elizabeth,
On thee the colour of my future life
Depends! for thou alone canst make me bless'd,
Or cursed, for ever!——O! this cruel doubt
Is worse than all my tortures;—but he comes,
Th' ambassador of love!

Enter the EARL *of* SUFFOLK.

What news, my Suffolk?
Shall I be happy?—O! I'm on the rack
Of expectation:—Didst thou tell my tale
As if it were thy own—and may I hope?——
Suff. My royal liege——
King E. Good Suffolk, lay aside
The forms of dull respect: be brief, and tell me—
Speak, hast thou seen her?—Will she be my queen?
Quick! tell me ev'ry circumstance—each word,

Each look, each gesture;—Didst thou mark them, Suffolk?—

Suf. I did; and will recount it all.—Last night,
By your command, in secret I repair'd
To Grafton's tufted bow'r, the happy seat
Of innocence and beauty; there I found
Thy soul's best hope, the fair Elizabeth:
Ne'er did these eyes behold such sweet perfection
I found her busied in the pious office
Of filial duty, tending her sick father.

King E. That was a lucky moment to prefer
My humble suit: touch but the tender string
Of soft compassion in the heart, and love
Will quickly vibrate to its kindred passion.
You urged our royal purpose, then?

Suf. I did,
With all the warmth of friendship; dwelt with pleasure
On ev'ry princely virtue that adorns
Your noble heart: she listen'd with attention,
And echo'd back your praises.

King E. Was not that
A kind propitious omen?

Suf. Such, indeed,
Hoping to find it, I call'd in the pow'rs
Of flattery to my aid, and gazed upon her,
As if confounded by her dazzling beauties:—
Conscious she smiled; but when, at length, I spake
Of England's monarch sighing at her feet,
The crimson glow of modesty o'erspread
Her cheek, and gave new lustre to her charms:
She turn'd aside; and as she silent bow'd
Her doubtful thanks, I mark'd the pearly tear
Steal down its secret track; and from her breast
Heard a deep sigh she struggled to conceal.
If I have any judgment, or can trace
The hidden feelings of a woman's heart,
Hers is already fix'd: I fear, my liege,

With all that England, all that thou could'st give,
The crown would sit but heavy on her brow.

King E. Not heavier, Suffolk, than it sits on mine:—
My throne is irksome to me: who would wish
To be a sov'reign, when Elizabeth
Prefers a subject!—Then th' impetuous Warwick—
His awful virtue shall chastise my weakness.
I've promised Louis to espouse his daughter,
To strengthen our alliance: would to Heaven
I had not! If I seek this coy refuser,
And break with France, Warwick will take th' alarm:
If once offended, he's inexorable.

Suf. I know him well.—Believe me, sir, the high
And haughty spirit, when it meets rebuke,
Is easiest check'd, and sinks into submission.
Let him, my liege, who ventures to arraign
His master's conduct, look into his own:
There ever is a corner in the heart
Open to folly. Warwick is not free
From human frailties.

King E. No; ambition fires
His noble breast; love triumphs over mine:
But well thou know'st I dread his keen reproach.
We seldom pity woes we ne'er experienced,
Or pardon weakness which we do not feel:
He is a hero.

Suf. Heroes are but men;
I have some cause to think so—but of that
We'll talk another time: meanwhile, my liege,
I think Lord Warwick is a useful friend.

King E. Ay, and a dangerous foe; the people love,
To adoration love him: if he falls
From his allegiance, crowds will follow him.
England has long been rent by civil broils,
And fain would rest her in the arms of peace;
Her wounds scarce closed, shall Edward open them,
And bid them bleed afresh? Believe me, Suffolk,

I would not be the cause of new divisions
Amongst my people for a thousand kingdoms.
Suf. 'Tis nobly said, and may thy grateful subjects
Revere thy virtues, and reward thy love!
King E. O, Suffolk! did they know but half the cares
That wait on royalty, they would not grudge
Their wretched master a few private hours
Of social happiness.—If France consents,
I am undone; and Warwick hath, ere this,
Enslaved me: curse on this state policy,
That binds us thus to love at second hand!
Who knows but he may link me to a wretch;
Wed me to Folly, Ignorance, and Pride,
Ill-nature, Sickness, or Deformity;
And, when I'm chain'd to misery, coldly tell me,
To soothe my griefs, 'twas for the public good?
Suf. How far you have commission'd him I know not:
But were I worthy to advise, my liege,
I would not be the dupe of his ambition,
But follow Nature's dictates, and be happy.
England has charms besides Elizabeth's,
And beauties that——
King E. No more! my heart is fix'd
On her alone; find out this pow'rful rival,
I charge thee, Suffolk: yet why wish to find,
What found, will make me wretched? Were he bound
In cords of tenderest friendship round my heart,
Dearer than Warwick, dearer than thyself,
Forgive me, but I fear I should abhor him.
O! think on something that may yet be done,
To win her to my heart ere Warwick comes.
Suf. I hear he is expected every hour.
King E. Grant, Heaven! some friendly wind may yet retard him.—
I dread his presence here,

Enter a MESSENGER.

Mess. My liege, the Earl
Of Warwick is arrived.
King E. Ha! when?—How?—Where?
Would he were buried in the rapid waves
That brought him hither! Comes he here to-night?
Mess. My liege, ere now he might have reach'd the palace,
But that the shouting multitudes press hard
On ev'ry side, and seem to worship him. [*Exit.*
King E. What's to be done? I cannot, must not, see him,
Till all is fix'd: once more, my best loved Suffolk,
Try the soft arts of thy persuasive tongue:
What method canst thou think on, to evade
This promised marriage with ambitious France?
Suf. Summon your council—lay your thoughts before them:
Meet Warwick there, and urge a sovereign's right,
To please himself in that which should concern
Himself alone. Firm Buckingham and I
Will plead your cause against the haughty Warwick;
Whom I would treat with cold civility,
And distant state, which ever angers more
Resentful spirits than the warmth of passion.
King E. 'Tis well advised: mean time, if possible,
I will compose my troubled thoughts to rest.
Suffolk, adieu: if Warwick asks for me,
I am not well—I'm hunting in the forest—
I'm busy—stay—remember what I told you,
Touching the earldom which I meant to give
Her father; that may bring her to the court;
You understand me, Suffolk?—fare thee well.—
[*Exit* SUFFOLK.
Why should I dread to see the man I love—
The man I rev'rence?—Warwick is not changed,

But Edward is—Suffolk, I know, abhors him;
A favourite must be hated: if he urges
This dreadful contract, I shall hate him too:
I cannot live without Elizabeth:
I'll think no more—if I must sacrifice
My friendship or my love—the choice is made.
[*Exit.*

ACT THE SECOND.

SCENE I.

A Room in the Palace.

Enter the EARL *of* WARWICK, *speaking to an* OFFICER.

* * *

Warw. 'Tis well; I shall attend his highness' pleasure. [*Comes forward.*
Meet me i' th' council!—Warwick might have claim'd
A private audience. After all my toils,
My perils in his service, 'tis a cold,
Unkind reception; some base whisperer,
Some needy sycophant, perhaps, hath poison'd
My royal master's ear: or, do I judge too rashly?—
As my embassy concerns
The public welfare, he would honour me
With public thanks—Elizabeth will chide me
For this unkind delay: but honour calls,
And duty to my king: that task perform'd,
I haste my love, to happiness and thee. [*Exit.*

SCENE II.

The Council Chamber.

KING EDWARD, DUKES *of* CLARENCE *and* BUCKINGHAM, EARLS *of* SUFFOLK, PEMBROKE, *&c.*

King E. Good Buckingham, I thank thee for thy counsel,
Nor blame thy honest warmth; I love this freedom;
It is the birthright of an Englishman,
And doth become thee: what says noble Suffolk?
Suf. I would not cross my royal master's will;
But, on my soul, I think this nuptial league
With France prepost'rous and impolitic;
It cannot last; we are by nature foes,
And naught but mutual poverty and weakness,
Can ever make us friends: she wants our aid
Against the pow'rful Burgundy, and therefore
Throws out this lure of beauty to ensnare you;
That purpose gain'd, she turns her arms against us.
Pemb. Why, let her; if she comes with hostile arm,
England, thank Heaven, is ready to receive her.
I love my country, and revere my king
As much, perhaps, as honest Buckingham,
Or my good fearful Lord of Suffolk here,
Who knows so well, or would be thought to know,
What France will do hereafter: yet I think
The faith of nations is a thing so sacred,
It ought not to be trifled with. I hate,
As much as you, th' unnatural forced alliance;
And yet, my lords, if Warwick is empower'd

For so I hear he is,) to treat with Louis,
I know not how in honour you can swerve
From his conditions. [*Shouting.*
Hark! the hero comes:
Those shouts proclaim him near: the joyful people
Will usher in their great deliverer
As he deserves.

Enter WARWICK.

King E. Thrice welcome, noble Warwick;
Welcome to all! [*To* CLARENCE, PEMBROKE, *&c.*
Suf. You've had, my lord, I fear,
An arduous task, which few could execute,
But Warwick; in the council and the field
Alike distinguish'd, and alike successful.
King E. What says our cousin France?
Warw. By me, my liege,
He greets you well, and hopes in closer ties
United soon, to wear a dearer name.
At length, thank Heaven! the iron gates of war
Are closed, and Peace displays her silken banners
O'er the contending nations; ev'ry doubt
Is now removed, and confidence establish'd,
I hope, to last for ages.
King E. Peace, my lord,
Is ever welcome; 'tis the gift of Heaven,
The nurse of science, art's fair patroness,
And merit's best protector; but if France
Would chain us down to ignominious terms,
Cramp our free commerce, and infringe the rights
Of our liege subjects, England may repent,
Too late, her rash credulity; and peace,
With all her blessings, may be bought too dear.
Warw. The shame would then be his who made
the purchase.
If any doubt my faith, my honest zeal
For thee, and for my country, let him speak,
And I will answer; punish me, just Heaven;

If, in the task, I have consulted aught
But England's honour, and my sovereign's glory!
King E. Mistake me not, good Warwick; well I know
Thy spotless truth, thy honour, and thy love;
But glory has no farther charms for me:
Raised by thy pow'rful aid to England's throne,
I ask no more: already I am great
As fame and fortune with her smiles can make me,
And all I wish for now, is to be happy.
Warw. That too, my liege, hath been thy Warwick's care;
Happy thou shalt be, if the fairest form
That ever caught a gazing lover's eye,
Join'd to the sweetest, most engaging virtues
Can make thee so. Bona accepts with joy
Thy proffer'd hand: she is, indeed, a gem
Fit to adorn the brightest crown: to see
Is to admire her—trust me, England's self,
The seat of beauty, and the throne of love,
Boasts not a fairer.
King E. Beauty, good my lord,
Is all ideal; 'tis the wayward child
Of fancy, shifting with the changeful wind
Of fond opinion: what to you appears
The model of perfection, may disgust
My strange capricious taste.
Warw. Such charms would fix
Inconstancy itself: her winning virtues,
Ev'n if her beauty fail'd, would soon subdue
The rebel heart, and you would learn to love her.
King E. Is the passion to be learn'd then? would'st thou make
A science of affection? guide the heart,
And teach it where to fix? Impossible!
'Tis strange philosophy! [*Rises and comes forward.*
My lord of Warwick,

Your zeal in England's, and in Edward's cause,
Merits our thanks; but for the intended marriage
With France's daughter—it may never be.
Warw. Not be? it must! your sacred word is pass'd,
And cannot be recall'd: but three days since
I sign'd the contract, and my honour's pledged
For the performance: Heavens! whilst fickle France
Is branded midst the nations of the earth
For breach of public faith, shall we, my liege,
Practise ourselves the vices we condemn?
Pass o'er a rival nation's ev'ry virtue,
And imitate their perfidy alone?
King E. You'll pardon me, my lord; I thought it part
Of a king's power, to have a will, to see
With his own eyes, and in life's little feast
To cater for himself; but 'tis, it seems,
A privilege his subjects can refuse him.
Warw. And so they ought; the king who cannot conquer
His private int'rest, for the public welfare,
Knows not his duty.
King E. Kings, my lord, are born
With passions, feelings, hearts, like other men;
Nor see I yet, why Edward's happiness
Must fall a sacrifice to Warwick's honour.
Warw. My honour, sir, is yours—my cause your own!
Who sent me, and whose image did I bear?
The image of a great and glorious king,
Or of a weak and wav'ring boy?—henceforth,
Choose from the herd of fawning sycophants
Some needy slave for your mock embassy,
To do your work, and stain the name of England
With foul reproach:—Edward, I blush for thee,
And for my country; for, from this hour, expect

From injured France, contempt, with deep resentment
For broken faith, and enmity eternal.
King E. Eternal be it then; for, as I prize
My inward peace, beyond the pomp of state,
And all the tinsel glare of fond ambition,
I will not wed her.—Gracious Heaven! what am I?
The meanest peasant in my realm may choose
His rustic bride, and share with her the sweets
Of mutual friendship and domestic bliss;
Why should my happier subjects then deny me
The common rights, the privilege of nature,
And, in a land of freedom, thus conspire
To make their king the only slave among them?
Warw. The worst of slaves is he, whom passion rules,
Uncheck'd by reason, and the pow'rful voice
Of friendship, which, I fear, is heard no more
By thoughtless Edward. 'Tis the curse of kings
To be surrounded by a venal herd
Of flatt'rers, that soothe his darling vices,
And rob their master of his subjects' love.
—Nay, frown not, sirs! supported as ye are,
I fear you not.—Which of this noble train,
These well-beloved counsellors and friends,
Assembled here to witness my disgrace,
Have urged you to this base, unmanly falsehood?
Shame on you all! to stain the spotless mind
Of uncorrupted youth! undo the work
Of Warwick's friendly hand, and give him back
A sov'reign, so unlike the noble Edward.
Suf. My lord, we thank you for the kind suggestion,
Howe'er ill-founded; and when next we meet,
To give our voice in aught that may concern
The public weal, no doubt shall ask your leave
Ere we proceed.

Pemb. My lord of Suffolk, speak
But for yourself; Warwick has too much cause
To be offended: in my poor opinion,
Whate'er you courtiers think, the best supports
Of England's throne are equity and truth;
Nor will I hold that man my sov'reign's friend,
Who shall exhort him to forsake his word,
And play the hypocrite. What tie shall bind
The subject to obedience, when his king,
Bankrupt in honour, gives the royal sanction
To perfidy and falsehood?

Buck. It becomes
But ill the Earl of Pembroke——

King E. Good my lords,
Let us have no dissensions here: we met
For other purposes; some few days hence
We shall expect your counsel in affairs
Of moment; for the present, urge no further
This matter.—Fare ye well.

[*The Council breaks up, and disperses.*

King E. [*Coming up to* WARWICK.] Lord Warwick, keep
In narrower bounds that proud impetuous temper;—
It may be fatal—there are private reasons;
When time befits, we shall impart them to you;
Meanwhile, if you have friendship, love, or duty,
No more of Bona—I'm determined. [*Exit.*

Warw. So—
'Tis well—'tis very well—I have deserved it;
I've borne this callow eagle on my wing,
And now he spurns me from him; 'tis a change
I little look'd for, and sits heavy on me.
Alas! how doubly painful is the wound,
When 'tis inflicted by the hand we love!
Cruel, ungrateful Edward!——
Ha! who's here?
The captive queen! if she has aught to ask

Of me, she comes in luckless hour, for I
Am pow'rless now.

Enter MARGARET *of* ANJOU.

Will Margaret of Anjou
Thus deign to visit her acknowledged foe?

Marg. Alas, my lord! inured to wretchedness
As I am, and familiar with misfortune,
I harbour no resentment, have long since
Forgot that Warwick ever was my foe,
And only wish to prove myself his friend.

Warw. Talk not of friendship, 'tis an empty name,
And lives but in idea; once, indeed,
I thought I had a friend—

Marg. Whose name was—Edward;
Read I aright, my lord, and am I not
A shrewd diviner? Yes, that downcast eye
And gloomy aspect say I am: you look
As if the idol made by your own hands,
Had fall'n upon, and crush'd you—is't not so?
Come, come, I know it is.

Warw. Amazement! naught escapes thy piercing eye
And penetrating judgment: 'tis too true;
I am a poor, disgraced, dishonour'd slave,
Not worth thy seeking; leave me, for the tide
Of court preferment flows another way.

Marg. The feast, perhaps, you have provided, suits not
With Edward's nicer palate; he disdains,
How sweet soe'er, to taste a foreign banquet,
And relishes no dainties but his own:—
Am I again mistaken?

Warw. Sure, thou deal'st
With some all-knowing spirit, who imparts
Each secret purpose to thee, else how knew'st thou
That Edward had refused to wed the princess?

Marg. O, it requires no supernatural aid
To trace his actions, nor has Marg'ret trod
The paths of life with unobserving eye;
I could have told you this long since; for know,
The choice is made,
And, but for your return, as unexpected
As undesired, had been, ere this, complete;
And, as in duty bound, you then had paid
Your due obedience to our—English queen.

Warw. Determined, say'st thou? Gracious Heaven! 'tis well
I am return'd.

Marg. Indeed, my lord, you came
A little out of season; 'twas unkind
To interrupt your master's happiness,
To blast so fair a passion in its bloom,
And check the rising harvest of his love.

Warw. Marg'ret, I thank thee—yes, it must be so;
His blushes, his confusion, all confirm it,
And yet I am amazed, astonished.

Marg. Wherefore?
Is it so strange, a mind, unfraught with wisdom,
And lifted high with proud prosperity,
Should follow pleasure through the crooked paths
Of falsehood, should forsake a useless friend
For the warm joys of animating beauty?

Warw. No; but was it like a friend—
Was it like Edward, to conceal his love?
Some base, insinuating, artful woman,
With borrow'd charms, perhaps——

Marg. Hold, hold, my lord,
Be not too rash; who fights in darkness, oft
May wound a bosom friend; perhaps, you wrong
The best and most accomplish'd of her sex.

Warw. Know you the lady?

Marg. But as fame reports,
Of peerless beauty, and transcendent charms;
But, for her virtue—I must ask of—you.

Warw. Of me! What virtues? Whose?
Marg. Elizabeth's.
Warw. Amazement! No, it must not, cannot be!
Elizabeth! he could not, dare not do it!
Confusion! I shall soon discover all! [*Aside*
But what have I to do with Edward's choice,
Whoe'er she be, if he refuses mine?
Marg. Dissimulation sits but ill, my lord,
On minds like yours. I am a poor weak woman,
And so, it seems, you think me; but suppose
That same all-knowing spirit which you raised,
Who condescends so kindly to instruct me,
Should whisper—Warwick knows the pow'r of love
As well as Edward, that Elizabeth
Was his first wish, the idol of his soul;
What say you?—Might I venture to believe it?
Warw. Marg'ret, you might; for 'tis in vain to hide
A thought from thee; it might have told you too,
If it be so, there is not such a wretch
On earth as Warwick; give me but the proof——
Marg. Lord Suffolk was last night despatch'd to Grafton
To offer her a share in Edward's throne.
Warw. Which she refused, did she not, Marg'ret? say
She did.
Marg. I know not that, my lord, but crowns
Are dazzling meteors in a woman's eye:
Such strong temptations, few of us, I fear,
Have virtue to resist.
Warw. Elizabeth
Has ev'ry virtue. I'll not doubt her faith.
Marg. Edward is young and handsome.
Warw. Curses on him!
Think'st thou, he knew my fond attachment there?
Marg. O, passing well, my lord; and when 'twas urged

How deeply 'twould affect you, swore by Heav'n
Imperious Warwick ne'er should be the master
Of charms like hers! 'twas happiness, he said,
Beyond his subject's merit to deserve,
Beyond his hope to wish for, or aspire to.
Warw. But for that Warwick, Edward's self had been
A subject still—and may be so hereafter.—
Thou smil'st at my misfortunes.
Marg. I must smile
When I behold a subtle statesman thus
Duped and deluded by a shallow boy,
Sent on a fruitless errand to expose
His country and himself.—It was, indeed,
A master-stroke of policy, beyond,
One should have thought, the reach of years so green
As Edward's, to despatch the weeping lover,
And seize the glorious opportunity
Of tamp'ring with his mistress here at home.
Warw. Did Nevil, Rutland, Clifford, bleed for this?
Marg. For this doth Henry languish in a dungeon,
And wretched Marg'ret lead a life of woe:—
For this you gave the crown to pious Edward,—
And thus he thanks you for his kingdom.
Warw. Crowns
Are baubles, fit for children like himself
To play with—I have scatter'd many of them:—
But thus to cross me in my dearest hope,
The sweet reward of all my toils for him,
And for his country!—If I suffer it—
If I forgive him, may I live the scorn
Of men, a branded coward! and old age,
Without or love, or rev'rence, be my portion:
Henceforth, good Marg'ret, know me for thy friend—
We will have noble vengeance! are there not,
Still left among the lazy sons of peace

Some busy spirits, who wish well to thee,
And to thy cause?

Marg. There are—resentment sleeps,
But is not dead: Beneath the hollow cover
Of loyalty, the slumb'ring ashes lie
Unheeded; Warwick's animating breath
Will quickly light them into flames again.

Warw. Then, Edward, from this moment I abjure thee!—
O, I will make thee ample recompense
For all the wrongs that I have done the house
Of Lancaster!—go, summon all thy friends—
Be quick, good Marg'ret; haste, ere I repent,
And yield my soul to perjured York again.
The king, I think, gives you free liberty
To range abroad?

Marg. He does; and I will use it,
As I would ever use the gift of foes,—
To his destruction.

Warw. That arch pander, Suffolk,
That minister of vice—but time is precious—
To-morrow, Marg'ret, we will meet in private,
And have some further conference: meantime,
Devise, consult, use ev'ry means against
Our common foe: remember, from this hour,
Warwick 's thy friend—be secret, and be happy.
[*Exit.*

Marg. What easy fools these cunning statesmen are,
With all their policy, when once they fall
Into a woman's power! This gallant leader,
This blust'ring Warwick—how the hero
Lessen'd to my sight!—Elizabeth,
I thank thee for thy wonder-working charms!
The time, perhaps, may come, when I shall stand
Indebted to them for the throne of England.
Transporting thought!

The golden wreath once more shall bind my brows:
Proud York, beware! for Lancaster's great name
Shall rise superior in the lists of fame:
Fortune, that long hath frown'd, shall smile at last,
And make amends for all my sorrows past. [*Exit.*

ACT THE THIRD.

SCENE I.

The Palace.

Enter MARGARET, LADY CLIFFORD, *and* ATTENDANTS.

Marg. Despatch these letters straight to Scotland: this
To the French Envoy—these to the Earl of Pembroke. [*To a* GENTLEMAN.
Thus far, my friend, hath fortune favour'd us
[*Turning to* LADY CLIFFORD.
Beyond our hopes: the soul of haughty Warwick
Is all on fire, and puling Edward loves
With most romantic ardour. O, my Clifford,
You would have smiled to see how artfully
I play'd upon him—flatter'd, soothed, provoked,
And wrought him to my purpose.—We are link'd
In firmest bonds of amity and love.

Lady C. Hath Warwick, then, so soon forgot his Edward?
Think'st thou the frantic earl will e'er exert
His ill-directed powers, to pull down

The royal structure which himself has raised?—
Never.
Marg. What is there disappointed love
And unrestrain'd ambition will not do?
I tell thee, we are sworn and cordial friends.
Lady C. Thou know'st, he hates the house of Lancaster.
Marg. No matter: he has marvellous good skill
In making kings, and I have business for him.
Lady C. And canst thou, then, forget the cruel wrongs,
The deep-felt injuries of oppressive Warwick,
To join the hand that forged thy husband's chains,
And robb'd thee of a crown?
Marg. But what, my Clifford,
If the same hand that ravish'd should restore it!
'Tis a court friendship, and may last as long
As interest shall direct: I've not forgot,
No, nor forgiven; I hate, abhor, detest him—
He shall perish.
I keep him for the last, dear, precious morsel,
To crown the glorious banquet of revenge.
Lady C. 'Tis what he merits from us, yet th'attempt
Were dangerous; he is still the people's idol.
Marg. And so, perhaps, shall Marg'ret be;—applause
Waits on success. The fickle multitude,
Like the light straw that floats along the stream,
Glide with the current still, and follow fortune.
Lady C. What further succour have we to depend on,
Beside Earl Warwick's?
Marg. O, his name alone
Will be an army to us.
Lady C. If we have it,
Resentment is a short-lived passion: what,
If Warwick should relent, and turn again
To Edward?

Marg. Then I have a bosom friend
That shall be ready to reward him for it—
But I have better hopes: Without his aid,
We are not friendless. Scotland's hardy sons,
Who smile at danger, and defy the storm,
Will leave the barren mountains to defend
That liberty they love; and to the aid
Of gallant Pembroke, add the powers which France
Will send to vindicate her injured honour:
Ere Edward can collect his force, and take
The field, we shall be thirty thousand strong.

Lady C. But what becomes of thy young prince?

Marg. Ay, there
I am indeed unhappy: O my child!
How shall I set him free? Hear, Nature! hear
A mother's prayer! O guide me with thy counsel,
And teach me how to save my darling boy!—
Ay, now I have it—monitress divine,
I thank thee!—yes, I wait but for the means
Of his escape, then fly this hated palace,
Nor will return till I can call it mine. [*Exeunt.*

Enter KING EDWARD *and* SUFFOLK.

King E. I fear we have gone too far: th' indignant Warwick
Ill brook'd our steady purpose—mark'd you, Suffolk,
With what an eye of scorn he turn'd him from us,
And lower'd defiance? That prophetic woman!
Half of her curse already is fulfill'd,
And I have lost my friend.

Suf. Some friends, perhaps,
Are better lost. You'll pardon me, my liege,
But, were it fitting, I could tell a tale
Would soon convince you, Warwick is as weak—

King E. As Edward, thou would'st say?

Suf. But 'twill distress
Thy noble heart too much—I dare not, sir,
Yet one day you must know it.

King E. Then by thee
Let it be told me, Suffolk—thy kind hand
Will best administer the bitter draught:
Go on, my Suffolk; speak, I charge thee, speak.
Suf. That rival, whom you wish'd me to discover—
King E. Ay, what of him?—quick! tell me, hast thou found
The happy traitor? give me but to know,
That I may wreak my speedy vengeance on him.
Suf. Suppose that rival were the man, whom most
You loved—the man, perhaps, whom most you fear'd:
Suppose 'twere Warwick?
King E. Ha! it cannot be!
I would not think it for a thousand worlds—
Warwick in love with her!—Impossible!
Where didst thou learn this falsehood?
Suf. From the lips
Of truth—from one, whose honour and whose word
You will not question—from Elizabeth.
King E. From her! nay, then, I fear, it must be so.
Suf. When last I saw her, (for again I went
By your command) though hopeless of success,
With all the little eloquence that I
Was master of, I urged your ardent passion;—
Told her how much, how tenderly you loved her,
And press'd with eagerness to know the cause
Of her unkind refusal, till at length
Reluctantly, with blushes, she confess'd,
There was a cause: she thank'd you for your goodness;
'Twas more, she said, much more than she deserved;
She ever should revere her king, and if
She had a heart to give, it should be Edward's.
King E. So kind, and yet so cruel!—well, go on.
Suf. Then told me all the story of her love;
That Warwick long had woo'd her—that her hand
Was promised, soon as he return'd from France:
Though once her father cruelly opposed it,
They were, by his consent, to be united.

King E. O never, Suffolk, may I live to see
That dreadful hour! designing hypocrite!
Are these his arts? is this the friend I loved?
By Heaven, she shall be mine! I will shake off
This cumb'rous garb of majesty that clings
So close around me, meet him man to man,
And try who best deserves her!
Good Suffolk, for a while
I would be private—therefore, wait without;
Let me have no intruders; above all,
Keep Warwick from my sight—— [*Exit* SUFFOLK.

Enter WARWICK.

Warw. Behold him here;
No welcome guest, it seems, unless I ask
My Lord of Suffolk's leave: there was a time
When Warwick wanted not his aid to gain
Admission here.

King E. There was a time, perhaps,
When Warwick more desired, and more—deserved it.

Warw. Never! I've been a foolish faithful slave;
All my best years, the morning of my life,
Have been devoted to your service: what
Are now the fruits? disgrace and infamy.
My spotless name, which never yet the breath
Of calumny had tainted, made the mock
For foreign fools to carp at: but 'tis fit
Who trust in princes should be thus rewarded.

King E. I thought, my lord, I had full well repaid
Your services, with honours, wealth, and power
Unlimited: thy all-directing hand
Guided in secret ev'ry latent wheel
Of government, and moved the whole machine:
Warwick was all to all, and powerless Edward
Stood like a cypher in a great account.

Warw. Who gave that cypher worth, and seated thee

On England's throne? Thy undistinguish'd name,
Had moulder'd in oblivion, had not Warwick
Dug from its sordid mine the useless ore,
And stamp'd it with a diadem. Thou know'st
This wretched country, doom'd, perhaps, like Rome,
To fall by its own self-destroying hand—
Toss'd for so many years in the rough sea
Of civil discord, but for me had perish'd.
In that distressful hour I seized the helm,
Bade the rough waves subside in peace, and steer'd
Your shatter'd vessel safe into the harbour.
You may despise, perhaps, that useless aid
Which you no longer want; but know, proud youth,
He who forgets a friend, deserves a foe.

King E. Know, too, reproach, for benefits received,
Pays every debt, and cancels obligation.

Warw. Why, that, indeed, is frugal honesty,
A thrifty, saving knowledge: when the debt
Grows burdensome, and cannot be discharged,
A spunge will wipe out all, and cost you nothing.

King E. When you have counted o'er the num'rous train
Of mighty gifts your bounty lavish'd on me,
You may remember next the inj'ries
Which I have done you: let me know them all,
And I will make you ample satisfaction.

Warw. Thou canst not; thou hast robb'd me of a jewel
It is not in thy power to restore:
I was the first, shall future annals say,
That broke the sacred bond of public trust
And mutual confidence; ambassadors,
In after times, mere instruments, perhaps,
Of venal statesmen, shall recall my name
To witness, that they want not an example,
And plead my guilt, to sanctify their own.
Amidst the herd of mercenary slaves

That haunt your court, could none be found but Warwick
To be the shameless herald of a lie?
King E. And would'st thou turn the vile reproach on me?
If I have broke my faith, and stain'd the name
Of England, thank thy own pernicious counsels
That urged me to it, and extorted from me
A cold consent to what my heart abhorr'd.
Warw. I've been abused, insulted, and betray'd
My injured honour cries aloud for vengeance;
Her wounds will never close!
King E. Oh, fear it not!
If I have been right
Inform'd, my lord, besides these dang'rous scars
Of bleeding honour, you have other wounds
As deep, though not so fatal; such, perhaps,
As none but fair Elizabeth can cure.
Warw. Elizabeth!
King E. Nay, start not! I have cause
To wonder most: I little thought, indeed,
When Warwick told me, I might learn to love,
He was, himself, so able to instruct me;
But I've discover'd all.——
Warw. And so have I;
Too well I know thy breach of friendship there,
Thy fruitless, base endeavours to supplant me.
King E. I scorn it, sir.—Elizabeth hath charms,
And I have equal right with you t'admire them:
Nor see I aught so godlike in the form,
So all-commanding in the name of Warwick,
That he alone should revel in the charms
Of beauty, and monopolize perfection.
I knew not of your love.
Warw. By Heaven 'tis false!
You knew it all, and meanly took occasion,
Whilst I was busied in the noble office
Your grace thought fit to honour me withal,

To tamper with a weak, unguarded woman,
To bribe her passion high, and basely steal
A treasure which your kingdom could not purchase.
King E. How know you that? but be it as it may,
I had a right, nor will I tamely yield
My claim to happiness, the privilege
To choose the partner of my throne and bed:
It is a branch of my prerogative.
Warw. Prerogative!—what's that? the boast of tyrants:
A borrow'd jewel, glitt'ring in the crown
With specious lustre, lent but to betray:
You had it, sir, and hold it, from the people.
King E. And therefore do I prize it; I would guard
Their liberties, and they shall strengthen mine
But when proud faction, and her rebel crew,
Insult their sov'reign, trample on his laws,
And bid defiance to his power—the people,
In justice to themselves, will then defend
His cause, and vindicate the rights they gave.
Warw. Go to your darling people, then: for soon,
If I mistake not, 'twill be needful; try
Their boasted zeal, and see if one of them
Will dare to lift his arm up in your cause
If I forbid them.
King E. Is it so, my lord?
Then mark my words: I've been your slave too long,
And you have ruled me with a rod of iron;
But henceforth know, proud peer, I am thy master,
And will be so: the king who delegates
His power to others' hands, but ill deserves
The crown he wears.
Warw. Look well, then, to your own;
It sits but loosely on your head, for know,
The man who injured Warwick never pass'd
Unpunish'd yet.
King E. Nor he who threaten'd Edward—

You may repent, sir.—My guards, there!—seize
This traitor, and convey him to the Tower;
There let him learn obedience.

Enter GUARDS, *who seize* WARWICK, *and endeavour to disarm him.*

Warw. Slaves, stand off!
If I must yield my sword, I'll give it him,
Whom it so long has served; there 's not a part
In this old faithful steel, that is not stain'd
With English blood in grateful Edward's cause.
Give me my chains! they are the bands of friendship,
Of a king's friendship; for his sake, a while
I'll wear them.

King E. Hence! away with him!—

Warw. 'Tis well:
Exert your power, it may not last you long;
For know, though Edward may forget his friend,
That England will not.—Now, sir, I attend you.

[*Exit.*

King E. Presumptuous rebel!—ah! who's here?

Enter a MESSENGER.

Mess. My liege,
Queen Marg'ret, with the prince, her son, are fled;
In a few hours she hopes, for so we learn
From those who have pursued her, to be join'd
By th' Earl of Warwick; in his name, it seems,
She has already raised three thousand men.

King E. Warwick in league with her! O, Heav'n!
'tis well
We've crush'd the serpent, ere his poison spread
Throughout our kingdom—guard the palace gates;
Keep double watch; summon my troops together—
Where is my brother Clarence, Buckingham,
And Pembroke? we must check this foul rebellion.

[*Exit* MESSENGER.

Enter the EARL *of* SUFFOLK.

Suf. My liege, the Duke of Clarence——
King E. What of him?
Suf. Hath left the court; this moment I beheld him
In conf'rence deep with Pembroke, who, it seems,
Is Marg'ret's firmest friend; 'tis whisper'd, both
Will join the queen.
King E. Well! 'tis no matter: I
Have deeper cause for grief; he cannot feel
A brother's falsehood, who has lost a friend,
A friend like Warwick.—Suffolk, thou behold'st me
Betray'd, deserted by the man I loved;
Treated with indifference by her
Whom I adored, forsaken by my brother,
And threaten'd by the subjects I protect;
Oppress'd on every side; but thou shalt see
I have a soul superior to misfortunes.
Though rebel Clarence wrings my tortured heart,
And faithless Warwick braves me, we will yet
Maintain our right——Come on, my friend, thou know'st,
Without his boasted aid, I could have gain'd
The crown—without him now I will preserve it.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT THE FOURTH.

SCENE I.

The Tower.

Enter the EARL *of* WARWICK.

Warw. Mistaken mortals plan delusive schemes
Of bliss, and call futurity their own,
Yet are not masters of a moment—This
Was the appointed time, the very day
Which should have join'd me to Elizabeth
In nuptial bonds:—O, cruel memory,
Do not torment me—if there be a crime
Of deeper dye than all the guilty train
Of human vices, 'tis ingratitude.
O, for that stoic apathy, which lulls
The drowsy soul to sweet forgetfulness!
But 'twill not be:—Elizabeth, where art thou?
Perhaps with Edward—O, that thought distracts me!
It is, I fear, as Marg'ret said, she 's false.
But when I look around me, can I hope
To find one virtue left in human kind?
My Pembroke, too! am I so soon forgotten?
O no; he comes——

Enter PEMBROKE.

Pemb. My friend!
Warw. My Pembroke, welcome!
Thee I have found most just and kind;

But, in the darkness of adversity,
The jewel friendship shines with double lustre.
Pemb. I am not of the insect train, that bask
In fortune's sunshine, and, when ev'ning damps
Arise, are seen no more: no, Warwick, what
I speak, I mean: you have been hardly treated.
Warw. O, Pembroke! didst thou know but half the wrongs
That I have suffer'd, thou would'st pity me.
Pemb. I would do more, much more, my Warwick: he
Who only pities, but insults the wretched;
I come with nobler views; I come to tell thee,
That I have felt thy injuries as my own,
And will revenge them too.
Warw. How kind thou art,
To feel for Warwick!
Pemb. Every honest breast
Must feel the injuries that a good man suffers:
Thine is the common cause of all: adieu
To English freedom, when our liberty
Shall be dependent on a sov'reign's nod,
When years of honest service shall be paid
With infamy and chains!
Warw. I 've not deserved them.
Pemb. Nor shalt thou wear them long; for thou hast great
And powerful friends—the noble Duke of Clarence—
Warw. Ha!
Then I am not forsaken: Clarence!—
Pemb. Yes:
The gallant youth, with honest zeal, declared
He loved his brother much, but justice more.
Warw. Then, Edward, I defy thee! gen'rous Clarence!
Thou know'st the man who thus could treat a friend
Would soon forget a brother—but say, Pembroke,
How stands the Duke of Buckingham?

Pem. Fast bound
To Edward; he, and that smooth courtier, Suffolk,
Are the two rotten pillars that support
His tott'ring throne: but Marg'ret——
Warw. Ay; how fares
My new ally? has she escaped the tyrant?
Pemb. She has; and, by some wond'rous means, contrived
To free her captive son.
Warw. Though I abhor,
I must admire that enterprising woman:
Her active mind is ever on the wing,
In search of fresh expedients, to recover
The crown she lost.
Pemb. Already she has raised
A pow'rful army; all the secret foes
Of York's ambitious line rush forth in crowds,
And join her standard; ere to-morrow's sun
Shall dawn upon us, she will set thee free.
Warw. O, Pembroke! nothing wounds the gen'rous mind
So deep as obligations to a foe.
Is there no way to liberty, my friend,
But through the bloody paths of civil war?
Pemb. I fear there is not.
Warw. Then it must be so:
I could have wish'd—but freedom and revenge
On any terms are welcome.
Pemb. Here then join we
Our hands——
Warw. Our hearts.
Pemb. Now, Warwick, be thou firm
In thy resolves; let no unmanly fears,
No foolish fond remembrance of past friendship,
Unnerve thy arm, or shake thy steady purpose.
Warw. No, by my wrongs, it shall not: once, thou know'st,
I loved him but too well, and this vile prison

Is my reward.—O, give me but the use
Of this once powerful arm, and thou shalt see
How it shall punish falsehood.—Are thy forces
Prepared?

Pemb. They are, and wait but for my orders:
Clarence will join us soon; one first great end,
Is to secure thy liberty; that done,
We haste to seize the palace, and redeem
The fair Elizabeth.

War. Redeem her; ha!
Is she a captive too?

Pemb. A willing slave;
A gay state prisoner, left to roam at large
O'er the young monarch's palace.

Warw. Ay, my Pembroke!
That 's more inviting than a prison. O,
She 's false, she 's false!——Who sent her there?

Pemb. She came,
It seems, to thank him for his royal bounties
To her good father, the new Earl of Rivers,
Who will, no doubt, persuade her to accept——

Warw. Of Edward's hand—Distraction! fly, my friend,
Haste thee to Marg'ret; tell her, if she hopes
For Warwick's aid, she must release him now,
Ere Edward's ill-timed mercy shall prevent her.

Pemb. I go, my friend; adieu! when next we meet,
I hope to bring thee liberty. [*Exit.*

Warw. Farewell!
She 's lost! she 's gone! that base seducer, Edward,
Hath wrought on her weak mind; it must be so.

Enter a MESSENGER.

Mess. My lord,
The Lady Elizabeth.

Warw. Amazement! sure
It cannot be! admit her, sir. Why, what
[*Exit* MESSENGER.

Could bring her here? Edward has sent her hither;
To see if I will crouch to him for pardon.
Be still, my jealous heart——

Enter LADY ELIZABETH GREY.

Lady E. G. My Warwick!

Warw. 'Tis a grace I look'd not for,
That a fair fav'rite, who so late had tasted
The pleasures of a court, should condescend
To visit thus a poor abandon'd captive.

Lady E. G. I come to take my portion of misfortune,
To pour the balm of comfort in, and heal,
If possible, the wounds which I had made.
Too well I know I was the fatal cause
Of all thy sorrows—but the noble Edward,
For so, indeed, he is——

Warw. And art thou come,
To plead the cause of him who sent me hither?

Lady E. G. I come to be the messenger of peace,
To calm thy troubled soul, and give thee rest;
To teach my Warwick to forget his wrongs.

Warw. Forget my wrongs! was that thy errand here,
To teach me low submission to a tyrant;
To ask forgiveness, kneel, and deprecate
The wrath of blust'ring Edward? If thou com'st
On terms like these to bring me freedom, know
It will not be accepted: now I see
Through all your arts; by Heav'n, I'd rather lose
A thousand lives, than owe one to his bounty.

Lady E. G. Either my Warwick is much changed, and so
I fear he is, or he would never talk
Thus coldly to me, never would despise
A life so precious, if he knew how much
Elizabeth had suffer'd to preserve it.
The gallant Edward, won by my entreaties——

Warw. Entreaties! didst thou then descend so low,
As to entreat him for me?

Lady E. G. Hadst thou seen,
When I implored him to forgive my Warwick,
How kind he look'd, how his repenting heart
Heaved with the pangs of agonizing friendship,
Thou would'st have pitied him.

Warw. Deceitful woman!
I see thy falsehood now; I am betray'd,
And thou art leagued with Edward to destroy me.
Go to your royal lover, and unite
Those only fit companions for each other,
A broken friendship and a perjured love.

Lady E. G. Unkind suggestions! how have I deserved it?
Have I for this refused a youthful monarch,
And spurn'd his offer'd sceptre at my feet?
But since I am suspected, witness Heav'n,
And witness, Warwick, to my vows! henceforth,
Dear as thou art, I cast thee from my love;
Elizabeth will never wed—a traitor.

Warw. Am I awake, and did Elizabeth
Say she would never wed her faithful Warwick?
I wish'd for freedom, but to purchase thine:
For life, but to enjoy it with my love,
And she disclaims me.

Lady E. G. Heav'n forbid! O, Warwick,
Let not the tide of passion thus o'erwhelm
Thy reason.

Warw. Canst thou pardon me? thou know'st
Th' unguarded warmth, the weakness of my nature.
I would not wrong thee, but I've been so oft,
So cruelly deceived.

Lady E. G. I know thou hast;
But never by Elizabeth.

Warw. O, no!
It is impossible that perfidy
Should wear a form like thine. [*Looking at her.*

I wonder not
That Edward loved: no, when I look on thee,
All beauteous, all enchanting as thou art,
By Heaven! I think I could almost forgive him.
Lady E. G. Then wherefore not be reconciled?
Warw. To whom?
The author of my wrongs? It cannot be:
Know, I have promised Marg'ret to destroy him.
Lady E. G. Destroy thy friend! ungen'rous, cruel Warwick!
Is 't not enough that thou hast triumph'd here?
Already we have pierced his noble heart
With the keen pangs of disappointed love:
And would'st thou wound his breast with added sorrows?
Would'st thou involve a nation in his ruin?
Warw. Elizabeth, no more: alas! too well
Thou know'st, there is a pow'rful advocate
In Warwick's breast, that pleads for perjured Edward.
Lady E. G. Cherish the soft emotion, O, my Warwick!
Warw. That angel form can never plead in vain.
But then, my friends—where is my solemn vow
To Marg'ret, and to Pembroke? There 's the tie.
Lady E. G. Thy league with Marg'ret must be fatal: grant
We should succeed, and Lancaster once more
Assume the throne; how dear the victory
That 's purchased with our fellow subjects' blood!
But if we fall——
Warw. Impossible!
Lady E. G. Oh, think
Betimes, what dreadful punishments await
The vanquish'd rebel! thou, perhaps, my love,
Shalt then be doom'd to th' ignominious block,
To fall inglorious; and when thou art gone,
Who shall defend thy poor Elizabeth?

Warw. Alarming thought! It staggers my firm purpose,
And makes me half a villain.

Enter an OFFICER.

Offi. Madam, the king demands your presence; I
Have order'd to convey you to the palace.
Warw. And wilt thou leave me?
Lady E. G. This, my Warwick, this
Is the decisive moment; now determine:
Accept of mercy, ere it be too late;
Ere hasty Edward——Shall I say thou wilt
Return to thy obedience, and receive
Thy pardon? Shall I? Speak, my love.
Warw. Perhaps
I may accept it, if 'tis brought by thee.
Lady E. G. Then we shall meet in happiness——
Warw. Farewell! [*Exit* LADY ELIZABETH.
Now to those worst companions in affliction,
My own sad thoughts, again; they're gloomy all,
And, like my habitation, full of horror.
I like not Edward's message; if he hears
My league with Margaret, he still has pow'r
To make me feel his rage: I have deserved it——
[*A Trampling heard without.*
Methought I heard a noise:—this way they come.
Perhaps it is the messenger of death——

Enter PEMBROKE.

Pemb. The messenger of vengeance—see her sword:
Accept it, and be free. [*Offers the Sword.*
Warw. First let me know
To whom I am indebted for 't.
Pemb. To me.
Soon as the rumour of thy foul disgrace
Had reach'd the public ear, the impatient people,
Uncertain of thy fate, tumultuous throng'd
Around the palace, and demanded thee:

Give us our Warwick; give us back, they cried,
Our hero, our deliv'rer!—I stepp'd forth,
And bade them, instant, if they wish'd to save
The best of men from infamy and death,
To follow me: transported, they obey'd:
I led them hither; forced the prison gates,
And brought thee this—direct it as thou wilt.
[*Gives the Sword.*

Warw. Welcome, once more, thou dearest gift of Heav'n,
Immortal liberty! my friend, I thank thee.
O, Pembroke! 'would thou hadst been here! my love,
My dear Elizabeth, is true.

Pemb. You think so?

Warw. She has told me such sweet truths;
Edward repents him sorely; he is grieved
At his ingratitude.

Pemb. And well he may;
I fear thou art betray'd: alas, my Warwick!
Thy open, gen'rous, unsuspecting virtue,
Thinks ev'ry heart as honest as thy own.
Thou know'st not Edward—nor Elizabeth.
The kingdom is in arms, and ev'ry hour
It is expected France will join the queen;
England will want her great protector's aid;
Edward and Rivers have conspired to cheat
Thy credulous ear; and who so fit to spread
The flimsy web as thy Elizabeth,
Their fair ambassadress? I see thou 'rt caught.

Warw. By Heav'n, it may be so! I am the sport
Of fortune and of fraud.

Pemb. Away, my friend;
It is not now a time to think of her:
Marg'ret, supported by thy pow'rful name,
And join'd by Clarence, waits us at the head
Of fifteen thousand men, who, eager all
To crush a tyrant, and pull down oppression,
Attend thy wish'd-for presence; not a soldier

Will act or move till Warwick shall direct them.
Edward and England's fate depend on thee.
Warw. Away, my friend; I'll follow thee.
[*Exit* PEMBROKE.
Yet stop
A moment—let no passion hurry me
To base dishonour—If my country calls
For Warwick's aid, shall I not hear her voice,
And save her? Pembroke may have private views,
And subtle Marg'ret too—Elizabeth!
I must not lose thee—Oh! direct me, Heav'n! [*Exit.*

ACT THE FIFTH.

SCENE I.

The Palace.

Enter LADY ELIZABETH GREY.

Lady E. G. The royal pardon came too late, and Pembroke
Already has released him; he is gone——
Elizabeth may never see him more.
A thousand terrors haunt me; a fond father,
A guiltless sov'reign, a distracted lover,
Fame, fortune, friends, and country, all depend
On one eventful moment—Hark! the sound

Of distant groans; perhaps the king—perhaps
My Warwick bleeds. O, agonizing thought!
Great God of armies, whose all-guiding hand
Directs the fate of nations, oh! look down
On thy own image, let not cruel discord
Divide their kindred souls! In pity hear,
Pour thy benignant spirit o'er their hearts,
And once more knit them in the bonds of peace!

Enter SUFFOLK.

Suf. The pray'r of innocence is always heard.

Lady E. G. Ha! Suffolk! whither hast'st thou? art thou come——

Suf. I come to heal thy sorrows, lovely fair one; To tell thee, Edward, and thy much-loved Warwick, Once more are friends.

Lady E. G. Indeed! O, welcome news! My joy 's too great for utt'rance; tell me, Suffolk, How was it? Speak! is Warwick safe? O, Heav'n!

Suf. A moment's patience, and I'll tell thee all. Marg'ret, thou know'st, had raised a pow'rful force, That doubled Edward's troops; elate with pride, And almost sure of victory, she urged The tardy spearmen; on they rush'd, as if Secure of conquest: the unhappy king Stood nobly firm, and seem'd to brave his fate; When Warwick, like a guardian god, appear'd: His noble mien, and all-commanding look, Struck deep attention; every eye was bent Upon him, and an awful silence reign'd O'er either host; he raised his voice on high, And, stop, he cried, your sacrilegious hands, Nor touch my friend: who pierces Edward's breast, Must pass through mine; I raised him to the throne And will support him there; to you I gave, From you, my fellow soldiers, I expect him: Howe'er the cruel wrongs have wounded me,

He never injured you, and I—forgive him.
He spake, and instant through the gazing crowd
A murmur ran; down dropp'd their nerveless arms,
As if enchanted by some magic power,
And, with one voice, they cried, Long live King Edward!

Lady E. G. How pow'rful is the tongue of eloquence,
When in the cause of virtue!—Well, what follow'd?

Suf. Encouraged by the shouting soldiers, Edward
On like a modest virgin wishing came,
Yet fearful. Warwick, with a bridegroom's speed,
To meet him flew; into each other's arms
They ran with speechless joy: the tender scene
Affected ev'ry heart, and the rough soldier,
Unused to melting sympathy, forgot
His ruthless nature, and dissolved in tears.

Lady E. G. Sweet reconcilement! then, Elizabeth,
Thou didst not plead in vain. But, say, how brook'd
The haughty queen this unexpected change?

Suf. Abash'd, confounded, for a while she strove
To stem the torrent, but in vain; then fled
Precipitate.

Lady E. G. But where, oh, where 's my Warwick?

Suf. With a few chosen squadrons he pursues
The disappointed Marg'ret.

Lady E. G. Oh, my fears!
I know not why, but at that hateful name
I tremble ever; my foreboding heart
Presages something dreadful.

Suf. Do not vex
Thy tender mind with visionary dangers.

Lady E. G. Oh! would to Heaven that he were shelter'd here,
And safe within these arms!

Suf. Be not alarm'd;
He is the care of Heaven; all good men love,
All bad ones fear him.

Lady E. G. Such superior merit
Must have a thousand foes, the constant mark
Of envy's poison'd darts.
Suf. There Suffolk feels
The keen reproach; with blushes I confess
There was a time, when, urged by fond ambition,
I look'd on Warwick with a jealous eye:
But this last noble deed hath won my heart,
And I am now a convert to his virtues;
But see, the king approaches. [*Exit* SUFFOLK.

Enter KING EDWARD.

King E. Health, and peace,
And happiness, to fair Elizabeth!
Thou art no stranger to the joyful news;
The lustre of those speaking eyes declares it.
Lady E. G. Suffolk, e'en now, hath bless'd me with the tidings.
King E. Oh! 'tis amazement all: Elizabeth,
When last we met, thou wert the suppliant; now,
'Tis I must ask forgiveness—I, who injured
The dearest, best of men: Oh! thou hast saved
Edward from shame, and England from destruction.
Lady E. G. Did I not say, my Warwick would be just?
King E. Thou didst; and on those beauteous lips fair truth
And soft persuasion dwell: long time he stood
Inflexible, and, deaf to friendship's voice,
Listen'd to nought but all-subduing love.
In after times, thy name shall be enroll'd
Amongst the great deliv'rers of their country.
Lady E. G. I have no title to the lavish praise
Thy gen'rous heart bestows; I only said
What duty prompted, and what love inspired;
Indulgent Heav'n has crown'd it with success.
King E. Thou hast done all: I am indebted to thee

For more, much more, than I can e'er repay.
Long time, with shame I own, hath Warwick soar'd
Above me; but I will not be outdone
For ever by this proud aspiring rival:
Poor as I am, there yet is one way left
To pay the debt of gratitude I owe him;
One great reward for such exalted virtues—
Thyself, Elizabeth.

Lady E. G. What means my lord,
My royal master?

King E. Yes; when next we meet
I will bestow it on him, will resign
All my fond claim to happiness and thee:
Though thy dear image ne'er can be effaced
From Edward's breast; though still I dote upon thee;
Though I could hang for ever on thy beauties;
Yet will I yield them to their rightful lord;
Warwick has earn'd, Warwick alone deserves them.

Lady E. G. 'Would he were here to thank thee for thy goodness!
Know, gen'rous prince, Elizabeth has long
Admired thy virtues, and could love admit
Of a divided heart, the noble Edward
Would share it with his friend.

Enter a MESSENGER.

Mess. My royal liege,
The rebels are dispersed; queen Marg'ret's son
Was slain in the pursuit—and she——

King E. I hope
Secured——

Mess. Is taken prisoner, and will soon
Be here.

King E. But where's Lord Warwick?

Mess. Behold, the queen approaches.

Enter MARGARET, *prisoner.*

Marg. Once more I am your prisoner.

King E. 'Twill be prudent
Henceforth to keep you so.
Marg. You dare not!
Thou think'st, perhaps, that I shall sue to thee
For mercy: no; in Margaret of Anjou,
Thou seest the wife and daughter of a king.
A spirit not to be subdued: though fall'n,
Triumphant still; and, though a pris'ner, free.
For know, I bear a mind above the reach
Of fortune or of Edward. I have lost
All I could wish to live for in my child;
And gain'd, what I most wish'd to gain—revenge!
Or life or death are now indiff'rent to me.
King E. For thy unbounded goodness, Power supreme,
Accept our praise!
Marg. Insulting piety! the common trick
Of hypocrites and slaves! when ye shall know
What Marg'ret knows, ye may not be so thankful.
Methinks, 'tis pity Warwick is not here,
To join in our devotion.
Lady E. G. Would to Heav'n
He were!
Marg. That monster, that perfidious slave,
Who broke his faith to Margaret and to thee!
Thy coward soul, unable to defend
The treasure thou hadst stolen, could meanly stoop
To court the traitor, whom thou dar'dst not punish.
Not so the injured Marg'ret—she repell'd
The wrongs she felt, and the deceiver met
The fate he merited.
King E. What fate?—E'en now,
Crown'd with immortal wreaths, the hero comes
To bless his friends, and punish guilt like thine.
Marg. Proud and deluded wretches! I look down
With pity on you: captive as I am,
'Tis mine to judge and punish; be it yours

To hear and tremble.
King E. Ha!
Lady E. G. What can this mean?
Marg. If I mistake not, Warwick is your friend;
Your lover too, I think.
Lady E. G. My lord! my husband!
Marg. Know then, that friend, that lover, perjured Warwick,
Hath not an hour to live.
King E. What murd'rous hand——
Marg. Mine, tyrant, mine: think not I mean to hide
The noble deed; it is my happiness,
It is my glory: thou wilt call me base,
Blood-thirsty, cruel, savage, and revengeful;
But here I stand acquitted to myself,
And every feeling heart that knows my wrongs.
To late posterity, dethroned queens,
And weeping mothers, shall applaud my justice.
King E. Justice, on whom?
Marg. Can Edward ask me? Who
Imprison'd Henry—robb'd me of a crown,
And placed it on a proud usurper's head?
Who gave his sacred promise to a queen,
And broke it? who, for which indignant Heav'n
Chastised him, basely murder'd my sweet boy?
Bereft of honour, fortune, husband, child—
Deprived of ev'ry comfort, what remained
For me but vengeance—what for him, but death?
King E. What hast thou done? When? Where?
Speak, murd'ress—speak!
Marg. Press'd by surrounding multitudes, and made
A slave, they dragg'd me to the conqu'ror's tent:—
There, the first horrid object I beheld,
Was the pale corse of my poor bleeding child:
There—as th' insulting Warwick stood, and seem'd

To triumph o'er him—from my breast I drew
A poniard forth, and plunged it in his heart.
[LADY E. G. *faints.*
King E. She faints, good Suffolk!—Help there!—help!—support,
[*Exeunt* LADY E. G. *and* SUFFOLK.
Assist her—Lead her in.
If it be true, as much I fear it is, a thousand deaths
Were punishment too little for thy guilt.
Thou shalt be tortured.
Marg. Tyrant, I defy thee:
Thy threats appal not me: prepare thy tortures:
Let them be sharp and cruel as thyself—
All that ingenious malice can suggest,
Or power inflict—'twill be my comfort still,
They cannot be so great as those you feel.
King E. Guards, take the monster hence! let her be chain'd
In some deep dungeon;
There let her perish:—hence! away with her.
Marg. Despair and horror visit thee—farewell—
He comes! my triumph is complete.—Look there!
[*Exit.*

Enter WARWICK *leaning on* TWO ATTENDANTS.

Warw. Where is he?—Lead me, lead me to my king.
King E. My Warwick! my preserver!—she shall bleed
For this in ev'ry vein.
Warw. Think not of her;
She has no power to hurt thee! and with guilt
Like hers, 'tis punishment enough to live:
This is no time for vengeance; death comes on
With hasty strides; 'tis but a little while,
A few short moments, and we part for ever.
My friend——
King E. I am not worthy of that name,

For I disgraced, dishonour'd, murder'd thee:
Edward's unkindness was the cause of all——
Canst thou forgive me?

Warw. O! may Warwick's crimes
Ne'er meet forgiveness from offended Heav'n,
If, from my soul, I do not pardon, love,
And honour thee!
My sweet Elizabeth,
Where is she? Edward, do not keep her from me—
We are no rivals now.

King E. Shock'd at the news
Of thy untimely fate, she sunk beneath it,
And fainted in these arms: I seized th' occasion,
And bade her weeping maidens bear her hence:
This would have been a dreadful sight indeed.

Lady E. G. [*Without.*] I can, I will support it.

Warw. Ha! that voice——
Sure 'tis Elizabeth's!

Enter LADY ELIZABETH GREY.

Lady E. G. O! give me way,
For I must see him—O! my Warwick!

Warw. O!
This is too much—the bitterness of death
Is to be sever'd thus from those we love.
Elizabeth, be comforted!

Lady E. G. O, no! it is my doom
Never to taste of joy or comfort more:
No! from this hateful world will I retire,
And mourn my Warwick's fate, imploring Heaven
That I may soon wear out my little store
Of hopeless days, and join thee in the tomb.

Warw. That must not be: I've done my friend a wrong,
And only thou canst make atonement for it.
Elizabeth, if e'er thou lov'dst,
Observe me now—Edward, for my sake,

Cherish this beauteous mourner, take her from me,
As the last present of a dying friend.
King E. If aught could make the precious gift more dear,
It would be, Warwick, that it came from thee.
O! I will guard her with a parent's care
From ev'ry ill, watch over, and protect her;
And when the memory of thee shall wake,
As oft it will, her poignant griefs, repel
The rising sigh, wipe off the flowing tear,
And strive to charm her to forgetfulness.
Warw. Then I shall die in peace.
Lady E. G. Yet thou may'st live.
Warw. Impossible: I feel
The hand of death press cold upon my heart,
And all will soon be o'er.
King E. Alas! my friend, the memory of thee
Will poison every bliss.
Warw. All-healing time,
That closes every wound, shall pour its balm
O'er thine.—Meanwhile, remember Warwick's fate.
I gave my word to Margaret, and broke it;
Heav'n is not to be mock'd; it soon o'ertakes us,
And in our crime we meet our punishment.
O, Edward, if thou hop'st that length of days,
And fair prosperity, shall crown thy wishes,
Beware of passion and resentment—make
Thy people's good and happiness thy own,
Discourage faction, banish flatterers,
Keep thy faith inviolate, and reign in peace.
I can no more—My love!—Have mercy, Heaven!
[*Dies.*
King E. Let ev'ry honour, to a soldier due,
Attend the hero to his tomb—meanwhile,
Deep in the living tablet of my heart
Will I engrave thy words—illustrious shade!
Living, thou wert my counsellor and friend—
And dead, I will remember and obey thee.

Lady E. G. Warwick, farewell! I shall not long survive thee.

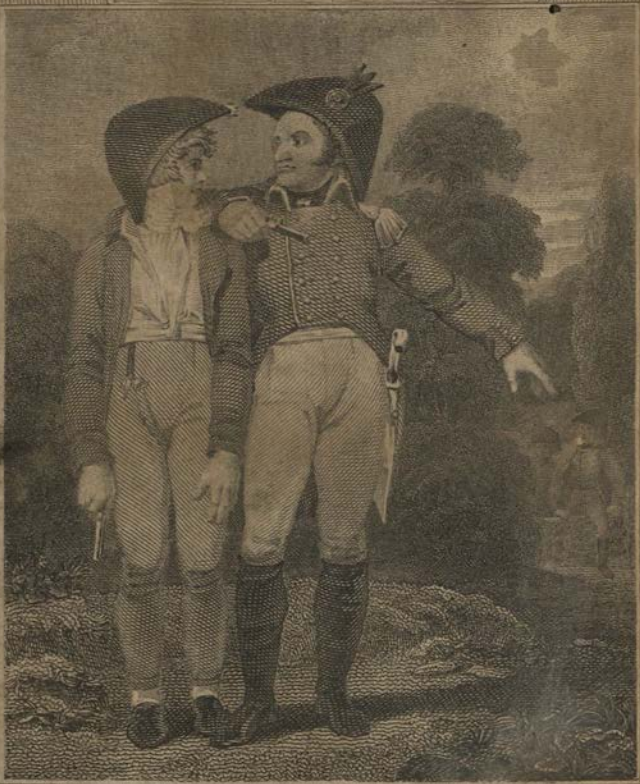
King E. I hope thou wilt.—Elizabeth, remember
His dying charge; think on thy promise giv'n.
Thou shalt remain with me, with me lament
Our common benefactor; we will sit
And talk together of my Warwick's virtues,
For I will try to emulate them all,
And learn, by copying him, to merit thee.
His great example shall inspire my breast
With patriot zeal—shall teach me to subdue
The pow'r of faction, vanquish party rage,
And make me, what alone I wish to be,
The happy king of an united people.

[*Exeunt omnes.*

THE END.

LONDON:
PRINTED BY THOMAS DAVISON, WHITEFRIARS.

RIVALS



SIR LUCIUS. — WELL NOW THEY ARE (MIN)
ACT V. SCENE II.

Painted by Singleton. Published by Longman & C° March 1816. Engraved by C. Heath.

THE RIVALS;

A COMEDY,

IN FIVE ACTS;

By RICHARD BRINSLEY SHERIDAN, Esq.

AS PERFORMED AT THE THEATRES ROYAL,

DRURY LANE AND COVENT GARDEN.

PRINTED UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF THE MANAGERS

FROM THE PROMPT BOOK.

WITH REMARKS

By Mrs INCHBALD.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR LONGMAN, HURST, REES, ORME, AND BROWN,
PATERNOSTER-ROW.

EDINBURGH:
Printed by James Ballantyne and Co.

REMARKS.

THE prologue to this comedy, delivered by the representative of a sergeant at law, addressing the audience, says—

"Your judgment given—your sentence must remain;
No writ of error lies—to Drury Lane."

The event contradicted this declaration; for, on the first night of performance, this excellent comedy was hissed from the stage, and had to appeal again and again before the tribunal of the town, ere justice was administered in its cause, and it became a public favourite.

As if to atone for those glaring wrongs which "The Rivals," on its first appearance, suffered, certain critics of the present day have pronounced the work equal, if not superior, in merit to "The School for Scandal." This is repairing one injury by the commission of another—by defamation against the character of the best dramatic composition since Shakspeare wrote.

"The Rivals" is an elegant, an interesting, a humorous, and most entertaining comedy; but in neither fable, character, nor incident, is it, like "The School for Scandal"—inimitable.

If Mrs Malaprop, Acres, Sir Lucius, and some other personages, in this drama, were not upon the stage before "The Rivals" was acted, they have all

appeared there, in various dramas, many a time since. But where can Sir Peter and Lady Teazle, where can the Surface family be found, either in original or copy, except in "The School for Scandal?" Where can be traced the plot or events of that extraordinary play, or where even the shadows of them?

The perpetual flow of wit in "The School for Scandal" may familiarise it so much with some auditors, that they cannot be made sensible of its perfect enjoyment. Whereas the sprinkling of wit and repartee, with which "The Rivals" is occasionally enlivened, is easily distinguished, and more eagerly received, in consequence of its inferior pages.

Sir Anthony Absolute is generally counted the most prominent, though Faulkland is, no doubt, the most original, character in the comedy. One particular circumstance adds extreme interest to this part. It is supposed, by the author's most intimate friends, that, in delineating Faulkland, he took a discerning view of his own disposition, in all the anxious tenderness of a youthful lover; and has here accurately described every sentiment, every feeling, which, at that trying period of his life, agitated his troubled heart. The very town of Bath, just before the writing of this play, had been the identical scene of all his restless hopes and fears.

The impressive language, the refined notions, the enthusiastic, yet natural, passion of Faulkland for Julia, with all the captivating charms of mind and expression which have been here given to this object of adoration, are positive vouchers that some very ex-

alted idea of the force of love, if not its immediate power, over himself, had at that time possession of the poet's fancy.

With all his gifts of eloquence in writing the dialogue of these lovers, Mr Sheridan was, however, at a loss for circumstances to incite them to speak; and, in that most interesting scene in the fourth act, he has borrowed his incident from the tale of Prior's "Nut-brown Maid."

The character of Lydia Languish is so justly drawn, that its only fault is, the want of stronger features: circumstances are deficient in making her an example of proper importance to romantic ladies. Accidents might have been invented that would have rendered her a much more pointed mark for ridicule.

Against the illiterate Mrs Malaprop common occurrence and common sense protest. That any Englishwoman, for these five hundred years past, in the habit of keeping good company, or any company, could have made use of the words—*extirpate* for *exculpate*, *exhort* for *escort*, and *malevolence* for *benevolence*, seems too far removed from probability to make a reasonable auditor smile.

When future generations shall naturally suppose, that an author of Mr Sheridan's reputation drew men and women exactly as he found them, this sketch of a woman of family and fortune, at the end of the eighteenth century, will assure the said generations, that the advance of female knowledge in Great Britain was far more tardy than in any other European nation.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

	DRURY-LANE.	COVENT-GARDEN.
SIR ANTHONY ABSOLUTE	*Mr Dowton.*	*Mr Munden.*
CAPTAIN ABSOLUTE	*Mr Barrymore.*	*Mr C. Kemble.*
SIR LUCIUS O'TRIGGER	*Mr Johnstone.*	*Mr Waddy.*
FAULKLAND	*Mr Elliston.*	*Mr Brunton.*
ACRES	*Mr Bannister.*	*Mr Fawcett.*
FAG	*Mr De Camp.*	*Mr Farley.*
DAVID	*Mr Purser.*	*Mr Beverley.*
JAMES		*Mr Lee.*
COACHMAN	*Mr Maddocks.*	*Mr Atkins.*
SERVANTS	*Mr Webb.*	*Mr Sarjant.*
	Mr Evans.	*Mr L. Bologna.*
MRS MALAPROP	*Miss Pope.*	*Mrs Davenport.*
LYDIA LANGUISH	*Miss Mellon.*	*Mrs Glover.*
JULIA	*Mrs H. Siddons.*	*Mrs H. Siddons.*
LUCY	*Mrs Harlowe.*	*Mrs Beverley.*
JENNY	*Mrs Jones.*	*Mrs Norton.*

THE RIVALS.

ACT THE FIRST.

SCENE I.

A Street in Bath.

COACHMAN *crosses the Stage.—Enter* FAG, *looking after him.*

Fag. What! Thomas!—Sure, 'tis he!—What, Thomas! Thomas!

Coachm. Hey! odds life!—Mr Fag! give us your hand, my old fellow-servant!

Fag. Excuse my glove, Thomas; I'm devilish glad to see you, my lad! why, my prince of charioteers, you look as hearty!—but who the deuce thought of seeing you in Bath?

Coachm. Sure, Master, Madam Julia, Harry, Mrs Kate, and the postillion be all come.

Fag. Indeed!

Coachm. Ay: master thought another fit of the gout was coming to make him a visit, so he'd a mind to gi't the slip—and whip! we were all off at an hour's warning.

Fag. Ay, ay; hasty in every thing, or it would not be Sir Anthony Absolute.

Coachm. But tell us, Mr Fag, how does young Master? Odd, Sir Anthony will stare to see the captain here!

Fag. I do not serve Captain Absolute now.

Coachm. Why, sure!

Fag. At present, I am employed by Ensign Beverley.

Coachm. I doubt, Mr Fag, you ha'n't changed for the better.

Fag. I have not changed, Thomas.

Coachm. No! why, didn't you say you had left young master?

Fag. No. Well, honest Thomas, I must puzzle you no farther;—briefly then—Captain Absolute and Ensign Beverley are one and the same person.

Coachm. But, pray, why does your master pass only for ensign?—now, if he had shammed general, indeed——

Fag. Ah, Thomas! there lays the mystery o' the matter!—Hark ye, Thomas, my master is in love with a lady of a very singular taste—a lady, who likes him better as a half-pay ensign, than if she knew he was son and heir to Sir Anthony Absolute, a baronet of three thousand a-year.

Coachm. That is an odd taste, indeed! but has she got the stuff, Mr Fag? is she rich, eh?

Fag. Rich! why, I believe she owns half the stocks! —Z——s, Thomas, she could pay the national debt as easily as I could my washer-woman!—She has a lap-dog that eats out of gold—she feeds her parrot with small pearls, and all her thread-papers are made of bank-notes!

Coachm. Bravo, 'faith!—Odd! I warrant she has a set of thousands at least; but does she draw kindly with the captain?

Fag. As fond as pigeons.

Coachm. May one hear her name?

Fag. Miss Lydia Languish;—but there is an old tough aunt in the way—though, by the bye, she has never seen my master—for he got acquainted with Miss while on a visit in Gloucestershire.

Coachm. Well, I wish they were once harnessed together in matrimony. But, pray, Mr Fag, what kind of a place is this Bath? I ha' heard a great deal of it;—here's a mort o' merry-making, eh?

Fag. Pretty well, Thomas, pretty well—'tis a good lounge—but damn the place, I'm tired of it; their regular hours stupify me—not a fiddle or a card after eleven! however, Mr Faulkland's gentleman and I keep it up a little in private parties;—I'll introduce you there, Thomas, you'll like him much.—But, Thomas, you must polish a little—indeed, you must:—Here, now, this wig! what the devil do you do with a wig, Thomas? none of the London whips, of any degree of ton, wear wigs now.

Coachm. More's the pity, more's the pity, I say—Odds life! when I heard how the lawyers and doctors had took to their own hair, I thought how 'twould go next. Odd rabbit it! when the fashion had got foot on the bar, I guessed 'twould mount to the box! but 'tis all out of character, believe me, Mr Fag: and look ye, I'll never give up mine, the lawyers and doctors may do as they will.

Fag. Well, Thomas, we'll not quarrel about that.

Coachm. Why, bless you, the gentlemen of they professions ben't all of a mind,—for in our village now, thoff Jack Guage the exciseman has ta'en to his carrots, there's little Dick the farrier swears he'll never forsake his bob, though all the college should appear with their own heads!

Fag. Indeed! well said, Dick! but hold, mark—mark, Thomas.

Coachm. Zooks, 'tis the captain! Is that the lady with him?

Fag. No, no, that is Madam Lucy, my master's mistress's maid; they lodge at that house—but I must after him, to tell him the news.

Coachm. Odd, he's giving her money!—Well, Mr Fag——

Fag. Good b'ye, Thomas; I have an appointment in Gyde's porch, this evening, at eight; meet me there, and we'll make a little party. [*Exeunt severally.*

SCENE II.

A Dressing Room in MRS MALAPROP'S *Lodgings.*

LYDIA LANGUISH *sitting on a Sofa, with a Book in her Hand*—LUCY, *as just returned from a Message.*

Lucy. Indeed, ma'am, I traversed half the town in search of it; I don't believe there's a circulating library in Bath, I han't been at.

Lydia. And could not you get "The Reward of Constancy?"

Lucy. No, indeed, ma'am.

Lydia. Nor "The Fatal Connexion?"

Lucy. No, indeed, ma'am.

Lydia. Nor "The Mistakes of the Heart?"

Lucy. Ma'am, as ill luck would have it, Mr Bull said, Miss Sukey Saunter had just fetched it away.

Lydia. Heigho! Did you enquire for "The Delicate Distress?"

Lucy. Or, "The Memoirs of Lady Woodford?" Yes, indeed, ma'am, I asked every where for it; and I might have brought it from Mr Frederick's, but Lady Slattern Lounger, who had just sent it home, had so soiled and dog's-eared it, it wan't fit for a Christian to read.

Lydia. Heigho! Yes, I always know when Lady Slattern has been before me: She has a most observing thumb, and, I believe, cherishes her nails for the convenience of making marginal notes. Well, child, what have you brought me?

Lucy. Oh, here, ma'am! [*Taking Books from under her Cloak, and from her Pockets.*] This is "The Man of Feeling," and this, "Peregrine Pickle."—Here are "The Tears of Sensibility," and "Humphrey Clinker."

Lydia. Hold!—here's some one coming—quick, see who it is—[*Exit* Lucy.]—Surely I heard my cousin Julia's voice!

Enter Lucy.

Lucy. Lud, ma'am! here is Miss Melville!

Lydia. Is it possible!

Enter Julia.

Lydia. My dearest Julia, how delighted am I! [*Embrace.*] How unexpected was this happiness!

Julia. True, Lydia, and our pleasure is the greater; but what has been the matter? you were denied to me at first.

Lydia. Ah, Julia, I have a thousand things to tell you! but first inform me what has conjured you to Bath?—Is Sir Anthony here?

Julia. He is; we are arrived within this hour, and I suppose he will be here to wait on Mrs Malaprop as soon as he is dressed.

Lydia. Then before we are interrupted, let me impart to you some of my distress; I know your gentle nature will sympathize with me, though your prudence may condemn me: My letters have informed you of my whole connexion with Beverley; but I have lost him, Julia;—my aunt has discovered our intercourse, by a note she intercepted, and has confined me ever since: Yet, would you believe it? she has

fallen absolutely in love with a tall Irish baronet, she met one night, since we have been here, at Lady Macshuffle's rout.

Julia. You jest, Lydia.

Lydia. No, upon my word:—She really carries on a kind of correspondence with him, under a feigned name though, till she chuses to be known to him;—but it is a Delia, or a Celia, I assure you.

Julia. Then, surely, she is now more indulgent to her niece?

Lydia. Quite the contrary: Since she has discovered her own frailty, she is become more suspicious of mine.—Then I must inform you of another plague; that odious Acres is to be in Bath to-day, so that, I protest, I shall be teazed out of all spirits!

Julia. Come, come, Lydia, hope for the best:—Sir Anthony shall use his interest with Mrs Malaprop.

Lydia. But you have not heard the worst:—Unfortunately I had quarrelled with my poor Beverley, just before my aunt made the discovery, and I have not seen him since to make it up.

Julia. What was his offence?

Lydia. Nothing at all; but I don't know how it was, as often as we had been together, we had never had a quarrel; and, somehow, I was afraid he would never give me an opportunity; so, last Thursday, I wrote a letter to myself, to inform myself that Beverley was, at that time, paying his addresses to another woman.—I signed it, "Your friend unknown," showed it to Beverley, charged him with his falsehood, put myself in a violent passion, and vowed I'd never see him more.

Julia. And you let him depart so, and have not seen him since?

Lydia. 'Twas the next day my aunt found the matter out; I intended only to have teazed him three days and a half, and now I've lost him for ever.

Julia. If he is as deserving and sincere as you have

represented him to me, he will never give you up so. Yet consider, Lydia, you tell me he is but an ensign, —and you have thirty thousand pounds!

Lydia. But, you know, I lose most of my fortune, if I marry without my aunt's consent till of age; and that is what I have determined to do ever since I knew the penalty; nor could I love the man who would wish to wait a day for the alternative.

Julia. Nay, this is caprice!

Lydia. What, does Julia tax me with caprice? I thought her lover Faulkland had inured her to it.

Julia. I do not love even his faults.

Lydia. But a-propos! you have sent to him, I suppose?

Julia. Not yet, upon my word! nor has he the least idea of my being in Bath:—Sir Anthony's resolution was so sudden I could not inform him of it.

Lydia. Well, Julia, you are your own mistress, though under the protection of Sir Anthony; yet have you, for this long year, been a slave to the caprice, the whim, the jealousy of this ungrateful Faulkland, who will ever delay assuming the right of a husband, while you suffer him to be equally imperious as a lover.

Julia. Nay, you are wrong entirely:—We were contracted before my father's death: That, and some consequent embarrassments, have delayed what I know to be my Faulkland's most ardent wish:—He is too generous to trifle on such a point;—and, for his character, you wrong him there too.—No, Lydia, he is too proud, too noble, to be jealous; if he is captious, 'tis without dissembling; if fretful, without rudeness. Unused to the fopperies of love, he is negligent of the little duties expected from a lover.—This temper, I must own, has cost me many unhappy hours; but I have learned to think myself his debtor for those imperfections which arise from the ardour of his attachment.

Lydia. Well, I cannot blame you for defending him; but, tell me candidly, Julia—had he never saved your life, do you think you should have been attached to him as you are? Believe me, the rude blast that overset your boat was a prosperous gale of love to him.

Julia. Gratitude may have strengthened my attachment to Mr Faulkland, but I loved him before he had preserved me; yet, surely, that alone were an obligation sufficient——

Lydia. Obligation! Why, a water-spaniel would have done as much! Well, I should never think of giving my heart to a man because he could swim!

Julia. Come, Lydia, you are too inconsiderate.

Lydia. Nay, I do but jest.—What's here?

Enter LUCY, *in a hurry.*

Lucy. O, ma'am, here is Sir Anthony Absolute, just come home with your aunt!

Lydia. They'll not come here:—Lucy, do you watch. [*Exit* LUCY.

Julia. Yet I must go; Sir Anthony does not know I am here, and if we meet, he'll detain me, to show me the town. I'll take another opportunity of paying my respects to Mrs Malaprop, when she shall treat me, as long as she chuses, with her select words, so ingeniously misapplied, without being mispronounced.

Enter LUCY.

Lucy. O lud, ma'am! They are both coming up stairs!

Lydia. Well, I'll not detain you, coz.—Adieu, my dear Julia! I'm sure you are in haste to send to Faulkland.—There—through my room you'll find another staircase.

Julia. Adieu! [*Exit* JULIA.

Lydia. Here, my dear Lucy, hide these books.—

Quick, quick.—Fling "Peregrine Pickle" under the toilet—throw "Roderick Random" into the closet—put "The Innocent Adultery" into "The Whole Duty of Man"—thrust "Lord Aimworth" under the sofa—cram "Ovid" behind the bolster—there—put "The Man of Feeling" into your pocket—so, so; now lay "Mrs Chapone" in sight, and leave "Fordyce's Sermons" open on the table.

Lucy. O, burn it, ma'am! the hair-dresser has torn away as far as "Proper Pride."

Lydia. Never mind—open at "Sobriety"—Fling me "Lord Chesterfield's Letters."—Now for them!

Enter MRS MALAPROP *and* SIR ANTHONY ABSOLUTE.

Mrs M. There, Sir Anthony, there sits the deliberate simpleton, who wants to disgrace her family, and lavish herself on a fellow not worth a shilling.

Lydia. Madam, I thought you once——

Mrs M. You thought, miss! I don't know any business you have to think at all: Thought does not become a young woman. But the point we would request of you is, that you will promise to forget this fellow—to illiterate him, I say, from your memory.

Lydia. Ah, madam! our memories are independent of our wills. It is not so easy to forget.

Mrs M. But, I say, it is, miss! there is nothing on earth so easy as to forget, if a person chuses to set about it. I'm sure I have as much forgot your poor dear uncle, as if he had never existed, and I thought it my duty so to do; and, let me tell you, Lydia, these violent memories don't become a young woman.

Sir Anth. Why, sure, she won't pretend to remember what she's ordered not! ay, this comes of her reading!

Lydia. What crime, madam, have I committed to be treated thus?

Mrs M. Now don't attempt to extirpate yourself

from the matter; you know I have proof controvertible of it: But, tell me, will you promise to do as you're bid? Will you take a husband of your friends' chusing?

Lydia. Madam, I must tell you plainly, that, had I no preference for any one else, the choice you have made would be my aversion.

Mrs M. What business have you, miss, with preference and aversion? They don't become a young woman; and you ought to know, that, as both always wear off, 'tis safest, in matrimony, to begin with a little aversion. I am sure I hated your poor, dear uncle, before marriage, as if he'd been a black-a-moor: and yet, miss, you are sensible what a wife I made! and when it pleased Heaven to release me from him, 'tis unknown what tears I shed! But, suppose we were going to give you another choice, will you promise us to give up this Beverley?

Lydia. Could I belie my thoughts so far as to give that promise, my actions would certainly as far belie my words.

Mrs M. Take yourself to your room: You are fit company for nothing but your own ill humours.

Lydia. Willingly, ma'am; I cannot change for the worse. [*Exit.*

Mrs M. There's a little intricate hussy for you!

Sir Anth. It is not to be wondered at, ma'am; all this is the natural consequence of teaching girls to read. Had I a thousand daughters, by Heaven, I'd as soon have them taught the black art as their alphabet!

Mrs M. Nay, nay, Sir Anthony, you are an absolute misanthropy!

Sir Anth. In my way hither, Mrs Malaprop, I observed your niece's maid coming forth from a circulating library; she had a book in each hand—they were half-bound volumes, with marble covers! From

that moment, I guessed how full of duty I should see her mistress!

Mrs M. Those are vile places, indeed!

Sir Anth. Madam, a circulating library in a town is as an evergreen tree of diabolical knowledge!—It blossoms through the year! And, depend on it, Mrs Malaprop, that they who are so fond of handling the leaves will long for the fruit at last.

Mrs M. Fie, fie, Sir Anthony! you surely speak laconically.

Sir Anth. Why, Mrs Malaprop, in moderation, now, what would you have a woman know?

Mrs M. Observe me, Sir Anthony—I would by no means wish a daughter of mine to be a progeny of learning; I don't think so much learning becomes a young woman;—for instance—I would never let her meddle with Greek, or Hebrew, or Algebra, or Simony, or Fluxions, or Paradoxes, or such inflammatory branches of learning; nor would it be necessary for her to handle any of your mathematical, astronomical, diabolical instruments; but, Sir Anthony, I would send her, at nine years old, to a boarding-school, in order to learn a little ingenuity and artifice. Then, sir, she should have a supercilious knowledge in accounts; and, as she grew up, I would have her instructed in geometry, that she might know something of the contagious countries; but, above all, Sir Anthony, she should be mistress of orthodoxy, that she might not mispell and mispronounce words so shamefully as girls usually do; and likewise, that she might reprehend the true meaning of what she is saying.—This, Sir Anthony, is what I would have a woman know; and I don't think there is a superstitious article in it.

Sir Anth. Well, well, Mrs Malaprop, I will dispute the point no further with you; though I must confess, that you are a truly moderate and polite arguer, for almost every third word you say is on my

side of the question.—But, Mrs Malaprop, to the more important point in debate,—you say you have no objection to my proposal?

Mrs M. None, I assure you.—I am under no positive engagement with Mr Acres; and as Lydia is so obstinate against him, perhaps your son may have better success.

Sir Anth. Well, madam, I will write for the boy directly.—He knows not a syllable of this yet, though I have for some time had the proposal in my head. He is at present with his regiment.

Mrs M. We have never seen your son, Sir Anthony; but I hope no objection on his side.

Sir Anth. Objection!—let him object if he dare!—No, no, Mrs Malaprop: Jack knows, that the least demur puts me in a phrenzy directly. My process was always very simple—in their younger days, 'twas, "Jack, do this,"—if he demurred, I knocked him down; and if he grumbled at that, I always sent him out of the room.

Mrs M. Ay, and the properest way, o' my conscience!—Nothing is so conciliating to young people as severity.—Well, Sir Anthony, I shall give Mr Acres his discharge, and prepare Lydia to receive your son's invocations; and I hope you will represent her to the captain as an object not altogether illegible.

Sir Anth. Madam, I will handle the subject prudently. Well, I must leave you; and let me beg you, Mrs Malaprop, to enforce this matter roundly to the girl—take my advice, keep a tight hand—if she rejects this proposal, clap her under lock and key; and if you were just to let the servants forget to bring her dinner for three or four days, you can't conceive how she'd come about. [*Exit* SIR ANTHONY.

Mrs M. Well, at any rate, I shall be glad to get her from under my intuition. She has somehow discovered my partiality for Sir Lucius O'Trigger. Sure,

Lucy can't have betrayed me!—No, the girl is such a simpleton, I should have made her confess it.—Lucy! Lucy! [*Calls.*] Had she been one of your artificial ones, I should never have trusted her.

Enter LUCY.

Lucy. Did you call, ma'am?

Mrs M. Yes, girl.—Did you see Sir Lucius while you was out?

Lucy. No, indeed, ma'am, not a glimpse of him.

Mrs M. You are sure, Lucy, that you never mentioned——

Lucy. O gemini! I'd sooner cut my tongue out!

Mrs M. Well, don't let your simplicity be imposed on.

Lucy. No, ma'am.

Mrs M. So, come to me presently, and I'll give you another letter to Sir Lucius—but mind, Lucy, if ever you betray what you are entrusted with, (unless it be other people's secrets to me,) you forfeit my malevolence for ever: and your being a simpleton shall be no excuse for your locality. [*Exit.*

Lucy. Ha! ha! ha! So, my dear simplicity, let me give you a little respite; [*Altering her manner.*] let girls, in my station, be as fond as they please of being expert and knowing in their trusts, commend me to a mask of silliness, and a pair of sharp eyes for my own interest under it!—Let me see to what account have I turned my simplicity lately; [*Looks at a Paper.*] *For abetting Miss Lydia Languish in a design of running away with an ensign; in money, sundry times, twelve pound twelve—gowns, five; hats, ruffles, caps, &c. &c. numberless.—From the said ensign, within this last month, six guineas and a half.*—About a quarter's pay!—*Item, from Mrs Malaprop, for betraying the young people to her*—when I found matters were likely to be discovered,—*two guineas and a black padusoy.*—*Item,*

from Mr Acres, for carrying divers letters—which I never delivered—*two guineas, and a pair of buckles.*—*Item, from Sir Lucius O'Trigger, three crowns, two gold pocket-pieces, and a silver snuff-box!*—Well done, simplicity! yet I was forced to make my Hibernian believe, that he was corresponding, not with the aunt, but with the niece; for, though not over rich, I found he had too much pride and delicacy to sacrifice the feelings of a gentleman to the necessities of his fortune. [*Exit.*

ACT THE SECOND.

SCENE I.

CAPTAIN ABSOLUTE'S *Lodgings.*

CAPTAIN ABSOLUTE *and* FAG.

Fag. Sir, while I was there, Sir Anthony came in; I told him you had sent me to enquire after his health, and to know if he was at leisure to see you.

Capt. Abs. And what did he say on hearing I was at Bath?

Fag. Sir, in my life, I never saw an elderly gentleman more astonished!

Capt. Abs. Well, sir, and what did you say?

Fag. O, I lied, sir—I forget the precise lie, but, you may depend on't, he got no truth from me.—Yet, with submission, for fear of blunders in future, I

should be glad to fix what has brought us to Bath, in order that we may lie a little consistently.—Sir Anthony's servants were curious, sir, very curious, indeed.

Capt. Abs. You have said nothing to them?——

Fag. Oh, not a word, sir—not a word.—Mr Thomas, indeed, the coachman (whom I take to be the discreetest of whips)—

Capt. Abs. 'Sdeath!—you rascal! you have not trusted him?

Fag. Oh, no, sir—no—no—not a syllable, upon my veracity!—He was, indeed, a little inquisitive; but I was sly, sir—devilish sly!—My master (said I) honest Thomas (you know, sir, one says honest to one's inferiors) is come to Bath to recruit—yes, sir—I said to recruit—and whether for men, money, or constitution, you know, sir, is nothing to him, nor any one else.

Capt. Abs. Well—recruit will do—let it be so—

Fag. Oh, sir, recruit will do surprisingly:—indeed, to give the thing an air, I told Thomas, that your honour had already inlisted five disbanded chairmen, seven minority waiters, and thirteen billiard markers.

Capt. Abs. You blockhead, never say more than is necessary.

Fag. I beg pardon, sir—I beg pardon—But, with submission, a lie is nothing unless one supports it.—Sir, whenever I draw on my invention for a good current lie, I always forge endorsements as well as the bill.

Capt. Abs. Well, take care you don't hurt your credit by offering too much security. Is Mr Faulkland returned?

Fag. He is above, sir, changing his dress.

Capt. Abs. Can you tell whether he has been informed of Sir Anthony's and Miss Melville's arrival?

Fag. I fancy not, sir; he has seen no one since he came in, but his gentleman, who was with him

at Bristol.—I think, sir, I hear Mr Faulkland coming down——

Capt. Abs. Go tell him I am here.

Fag. Yes, sir—[*Going.*] I beg pardon, sir, but should Sir Anthony call, you will do me the favour to remember that we are recruiting, if you please.

Capt. Abs. Well, well.

Fag. And in tenderness to my character, if your honour could bring in the chairmen and waiters, I shall esteem it as an obligation;—for though I never scruple a lie to serve my master, yet it hurts one's conscience to be found out. [*Exit.*

Capt. Abs. Now for my whimsical friend:—If he does not know that his mistress is here, I'll tease him a little before I tell him——

Enter FAG.

Fag. Mr Faulkland, sir. [*Exit.*

Enter FAULKLAND.

Capt. Abs. Faulkland, you're welcome to Bath again: you are punctual in your return.

Faulk. Yes; I had nothing to detain me when I had finished the business I went on. Well, what news since I left you? How stand matters between you and Lydia?

Capt. Abs. 'Faith, much as they were; I have not seen her since our quarrel; however, I expect to be recalled every hour.

Faulk. Why don't you persuade her to go off with you at once?

Capt. Abs. What, and lose two-thirds of her fortune? You forget that, my friend.—No, no, I could have brought her to that long ago.

Faulk. Nay, then, you trifle too long—if you are sure of her, propose to the aunt, in your own character, and write to Sir Anthony for his consent.

Capt. Abs. Softly, softly! for though I am convinced

my little Lydia would elope with me as Ensign Beverley, yet am I by no means certain that she would take me with the impediment of our friends' consent, a regular humdrum wedding, and the reversion of a good fortune on my side.—Well, but Faulkland, you'll dine with us to-day at the hotel?

Faulk. Indeed, I cannot; I am not in spirits to be of such a party.

Capt. Abs. By Heavens! I shall forswear your company. You are the most teasing, captious, incorrigible lover!—Do love like a man.

Faulk. Ah! Jack, your heart and soul are not, like mine, fixed immutably on one only object.—You throw for a large stake, but, losing—you could stake and throw again;—but I have set my sum of happiness on this cast, and not to succeed were to be stripped of all.

Capt. Abs. But, for Heaven's sake! what grounds for apprehension can your whimsical brain conjure up at present?

Faulk. What grounds for apprehension, did you say? Heavens! are there not a thousand? I fear for her spirits—her health—her life—O! Jack, when delicate and feeling souls are separated, there is not a feature in the sky, not a movement of the elements, not an aspiration of the breeze, but hints some cause for a lover's apprehension!

Capt. Abs. Ay, but we may chuse whether we will take the hint or not.—So then, Faulkland, if you were convinced that Julia were well, and in spirits, you would be entirely content?

Faulk. I should be happy beyond measure—I am anxious only for that.

Capt. Abs. Then, to cure your anxiety at once—Miss Melville is in perfect health, and is at this moment in Bath.

Faulk. Nay, Jack—don't trifle with me.

Capt. Abs. She is arrived here with my father, within this hour.

Faulk. Can you be serious?

Capt. Abs. I thought you knew Sir Anthony better than to be surprised at a sudden whim of this kind—Seriously then, it is as I tell you—upon my honour.

Faulk. My dear Jack—now nothing on earth can give me a moment's uneasiness.

Enter FAG.

Fag. Sir, Mr Acres, just arrived, is below.

Capt. Abs. Stay, Faulkland, this Acres lives within a mile of Sir Anthony, and he shall tell you how your mistress has been ever since you left her.—Fag, show the gentleman up. [*Exit* FAG.

Faulk. What, is he much acquainted in the family?

Capt. Abs. Oh, very intimate: He is likewise a rival of mine—that is, of my other self's, for he does not think his friend, Captain Absolute, ever saw the lady in question;—and it is ridiculous enough to hear him complain to me of one Beverley, a concealed, sculking rival, who—

Faulk. Hush!—He's here!

Enter ACRES.

Acres. Hah! my dear friend, noble Captain, and honest Jack, how dost thou? just arrived, 'faith, as you see.—Sir, your humble servant. Warm work on the roads, Jack—odds whips and wheels! I've travelled like a comet, with a tail of dust all the way as long as the Mall.

Capt. Abs. Ah! Bob, you are, indeed, an eccentric planet, but we know your attraction hither—give me leave to introduce Mr Faulkland to you; Mr Faulkland, Mr Acres.

Acres. Sir, I am most heartily glad to see you:

sir, I solicit your connexions.—Hey, Jack—what, this is Mr Faulkland, who——

Capt. Abs. Ay, Bob, Miss Melville's Mr Faulkland.

Acres. Ah! Mr Faulkland, you are indeed a happy man!

Faulk. I have not seen Miss Melville yet, sir,—I hope she enjoyed full health and spirits in Devonshire?

Acres. Never knew her better in my life, sir—never better.—Odds blushes and blooms! she has been as healthy as the German spa.

Faulk. Indeed!—I did hear that she had been a little indisposed.

Acres. False, false, sir—only said to vex you: quite the reverse, I assure you.

Faulk. There, Jack, you see she has the advantage of me; I had almost fretted myself ill.

Capt. Abs. Now are you angry with your mistress for not having been sick!

Faulk. No, no, you misunderstand me:—yet surely a little trifling indisposition is not an unnatural consequence of absence from those we love.—Now confess—isn't there something unkind in this violent, robust, unfeeling health?

Capt. Abs. Oh, it was very unkind of her to be well in your absence, to be sure!

Acres. Good apartments, Jack.

Faulk. Well, sir, but you were saying that Miss Melville has been so exceedingly well—what then she has been merry and gay I suppose?—always in spirits, hey?

Acres. Merry! odds crickets! she has been the belle and spirit of the company wherever she has been—so lively and entertaining! so full of wit and humour!

Faulk. By my soul! there is an innate levity in woman that nothing can overcome!—What! happy, and I away!

Capt. Abs. Just now you were only apprehensive for your mistress's spirits.

Faulk. Why, Jack, have I been the joy and spirit of the company?

Capt. Abs. No, indeed, you have not.

Faulk. Have I been lively and entertaining?

Capt. Abs. Oh, upon my word, I acquit you.

Faulk. Have I been full of wit and humour?

Capt. Abs. No, 'faith, to do you justice, you have been confoundedly stupid, indeed.

Acres. What's the matter with the gentleman?

Capt. Abs. He is only expressing his great satisfaction at hearing that Julia has been so well and happy—that's all—hey, Faulkland?

Faulk. Yes, yes, she has a happy disposition!

Acres. That she has, indeed—then she is so accomplished—so sweet a voice—so expert at her harpsichord—such a mistress of flat and sharp, squallante, rumblante, and quiverante!—there was this time month—odds minnums and crotchets! how she did chirrup at Mrs Piano's concert!

Faulk. Fool! fool that I am! to fix all my happiness on such a trifler! 'Sdeath! to make herself the pipe and ballad-monger of a circle! to sooth her light heart with catches and glees!—What can you say to this, sir?

Capt. Abs. Why, that I should be glad to hear my mistress had been so merry, sir.

Faulk. Nay, nay, nay—I'm not sorry that she has been happy—no, no, I am glad of that—I would not have had her sad or sick—but she has been dancing too, I doubt not?

Acres. What does the gentleman say about dancing?

Capt. Abs. He says the lady we speak of dances as well as she sings.

Acres. Ay, truly does she—there was at our last race ball——

Faulk. Hell and the devil! There! there—I told you so! I told you so! oh! she thrives in my absence!—Dancing! but her whole feelings have been in opposition with mine;—I have been anxious, silent, pensive, sedentary—my days have been hours of care, my nights of watchfulness.—She has been all health! spirit! laugh! song! dance! oh! d—ned, d—ned, levity!

Capt. Abs. For Heaven's sake, Faulkland, don't expose yourself so!—Suppose she has danced, what then?—does not the ceremony of society often oblige—

Faulk. Well, well, I'll contain myself—perhaps, as you say—for form sake.—What, Mr Acres, you were praising Miss Melville's manner of dancing a minuet—hey?

Acres. Oh, I dare ensure her for that—but what I was going to speak of, was her country dancing:—odds swimmings! she has such an air with her!—

Faulk. Now disappointment on her!—defend this, Absolute, why don't you defend this?—country dances! jiggs and reels! am I to blame now? A minuet I could have forgiven—I should not have minded that—I say, I should not have regarded a minuet—but country dances! Z——ds! had she made one in a cotillion—I believe I could have forgiven even that—but to be monkey-led for a night!—to run the gauntlet through a string of amorous palming puppies!—to show paces, like a managed filly!—Oh, Jack, there never can be but one man in the world whom a truly modest and delicate woman ought to pair with in a country dance; and, even then, the rest of the couples should be her great uncles and aunts!

Capt. Abs. Ay, to be sure! grandfathers and grandmothers!

Faulk. If there be but one vicious mind in the set, it will spread like a contagion—the action of their pulse beats to the lascivious movement of the jigg—

their quivering, warm-breathed sighs impregnate the air—the atmosphere becomes electrical to love, and each amorous spark darts through every link of the chain!—I must leave you—I own I am somewhat flurried—and that confounded looby has perceived it. [*Going.*

Capt. Abs. Nay, but stay, Faulkland, and thank Mr Acres for his good news.

Faulk. D—n his news! [*Exit.*

Capt. Abs. Ha! ha! ha! poor Faulkland! five minutes since—"nothing on earth could give him a moment's uneasiness!"

Acres. The gentleman wasn't angry at my praising his mistress, was he?

Capt. Abs. A little jealous, I believe, Bob.

Acres. You don't say so? Ha! ha! jealous of me!—that's a good joke!

Capt. Abs. There's nothing strange in that, Bob; let me tell you, that sprightly grace and insinuating manner of yours will do some mischief among the girls here.

Acres. Ah! you joke—ha! ha! mischief—ha! ha! but you know I am not my own property, my dear Lydia has forestalled me.—She could never abide me in the country, because I used to dress so badly—but, odds frogs and tambours! I sha'n't take matters so here—now ancient madam has no voice in it—I'll make my old clothes know who's master—I shall straitway cashier the hunting frock—and render my leather breeches incapable—My hair has been in training some time.

Capt. Abs. Indeed!

Acres. Ay—and thoff the side curls are a little restive, my hind part takes it very kindly.

Capt. Abs. Oh, you'll polish, I doubt not.

Acres. Absolutely I propose so—then if I can find out this Ensign Beverley, odds triggers and flints! I'll make him know the difference o't.

Capt. Abs. Spoke like a man—but, pray, Bob, I observe you have got an odd kind of a new method of swearing.

Acres. Ha! ha! you've taken notice of it—'tis genteel, isn't it?—I didn't invent it myself though; but a commander in our militia—a great scholar, I assure you—says that there is no meaning in the common oaths, and that nothing but their antiquity makes them respectable;—because, he says, the ancients would never stick to an oath or two, but would say, by Jove! or by Bacchus! or by Mars! or by Venus! or by Pallas! according to the sentiment;—so that to swear with propriety, says my little Major, the "oath should be an echo to the sense;" and this we call the oath referential, or sentimental swearing—ha! ha! ha! 'tis genteel, isn't it?

Capt. Abs. Very genteel, and very new indeed—and I dare say will supplant all other figures of imprecation.

Acres. Ay, ay, the best terms will grow obsolete—Damns have had their day.

Enter FAG.

Fag. Sir, there is a gentleman below desires to see you—Shall I show him into the parlour?

Capt. Abs. Ay—you may.

Acres. Well, I must begone——

Capt. Abs. Stay; who is it, Fag?

Fag. Your father, sir.

Capt. Abs. You puppy, why didn't you show him up directly? [*Exit* FAG.

Acres. You have business with Sir Anthony.—I expect a message from Mrs Malaprop at my lodgings. I have sent also to my dear friend, Sir Lucius O'Trigger.—Adieu, Jack, we must meet at night, when you shall give me a dozen bumpers to little Lydia.

Capt. Abs. That I will, with all my heart. [*Exit* ACRES.] Now for a parental lecture.—I hope he has heard nothing of the business that has brought me here—I wish the gout had held him fast in Devonshire, with all my soul!

Enter SIR ANTHONY.

Sir, I am delighted to see you here, and looking so well!—your sudden arrival at Bath made me apprehensive for your health.

Sir Anth. Very apprehensive, I dare say, Jack.—What, you are recruiting here, hey?

Capt. Abs. Yes, sir, I am on duty.

Sir Anth. Well, Jack, I am glad to see you, though I did not expect it; for I was going to write to you on a little matter of business.—Jack, I have been considering that I grow old and infirm, and shall probably not trouble you long.

Capt. Abs. Pardon me, sir, I never saw you look more strong and hearty, and I pray fervently that you may continue so.

Sir Anth. I hope your prayers may be heard with all my heart. Well then, Jack, I have been considering that I am so strong and hearty, I may continue to plague you a long time.—Now, Jack, I am sensible that the income of your commission, and what I have hitherto allowed you, is but a small pittance for a lad of your spirit.

Capt. Abs. Sir, you are very good.

Sir Anth. And it is my wish, while yet I live, to have my boy make some figure in the world.—I have resolved, therefore, to fix you at once in a noble independence.

Capt. Abs. Sir, your kindness overpowers me.—Yet, sir, I presume you would not wish me to quit the army?

Sir Anth. Oh! that shall be as your wife chuses.

Capt. Abs. My wife, sir!

Sir Anth. Ay, ay, settle that between you—settle that between you.

Capt. Abs. A wife, sir, did you say?

Sir Anth. Ay, a wife—why, did not I mention her before?

Capt. Abs. Not a word of her, sir.

Sir Anth. Odd so!—I mustn't forget her though.—Yes, Jack, the independence I was talking of is by a marriage—the fortune is saddled with a wife—but I suppose that makes no difference?

Capt. Abs. Sir! sir! you amaze me!

Sir Anth. Why, what the devil's the matter with the fool? Just now you were all gratitude and duty.

Capt. Abs. I was, sir,—you talked to me of independence and a fortune, but not a word of a wife.

Sir Anth. Why—what difference does that make? Odds life, sir! if you have the estate, you must take it with the live stock on it, as it stands.

Capt. Abs. Pray, sir, who is the lady?

Sir Anth. What's that to you, sir?—Come, give me your promise to love, and to marry her directly.

Capt. Abs. Sure, sir, this is not very reasonable, to summon my affections for a lady I know nothing of!

Sir Anth. I am sure, sir, 'tis more unreasonable in you to object to a lady you know nothing of.

Capt. Abs. You must excuse me, sir, if I tell you, once for all, that in this point I cannot obey you.

Sir Anth. Hark ye, Jack;—I have heard you for some time with patience—I have been cool,—quite cool; but take care—you know I am compliance itself—when I am not thwarted; no one more easily led—when I have my own way;—but don't put me in a phrensy.

Capt. Abs. Sir, I must repeat it—in this I cannot obey you.

Sir Anth. Now d—n me! if ever I call you Jack again while I live!

Capt. Abs. Nay, sir, but hear me.

Sir Anth. Sir, I won't hear a word—not a word! not one word! so give me your promise by a nod—and I'll tell you what, Jack—I mean, you dog—if you don't, by——

Capt. Abs. What, sir, promise to link myself to some mass of ugliness! to——

Sir Anth. Z——ds! sirrah! the lady shall be as ugly as I chuse: she shall have a hump on each shoulder; she shall be as crooked as the crescent; her one eye shall roll like the bull's in Cox's Museum—she shall have a skin like a mummy, and the beard of a Jew—she shall be all this, sirrah!—yet I'll make you ogle her all day, and sit up all night, to write sonnets on her beauty.

Capt. Abs. This is reason and moderation indeed!

Sir Anth. None of your sneering, puppy! no grinning, jackanapes!

Capt. Abs. Indeed, sir, I never was in a worse humour for mirth in my life.

Sir Anth. 'Tis false, sir; I know you are laughing in your sleeve; I know you'll grin when I am gone, sirrah!

Capt. Abs. Sir, I hope I know my duty better.

Sir Anth. None of your passion, sir! none of your violence, if you please—It won't do with me, I promise you.

Capt. Abs. Indeed, sir, I never was cooler in my life.

Sir Anth. 'Tis a confounded lie!—I know you are in a passion in your heart! I know you are, you hypocritical young dog—but it won't do.

Capt. Abs. Nay, sir, upon my word——

Sir Anth. So you will fly out! can't you be cool, like me? What the devil good can passion do?—passion is of no service, you impudent, insolent, overbearing reprobate!—There, you sneer again!—don't provoke me!—but you rely upon the mildness of my temper—you do, you dog! you play upon the

meekness of my disposition? Yet take care—the patience of a saint may be overcome at last!—but mark! I give you six hours and a half to consider of this: if you then agree, without any condition, to do every thing on earth that I chuse, why—confound you! I may in time forgive you—If not, z——ds! don't enter the same hemisphere with me! don't dare to breathe the same air, or use the same light with me; but get an atmosphere and a sun of your own! I'll strip you of your commission; I'll lodge a five-and-threepence in the hands of trustees, and you shall live on the interest.—I'll disown you, I'll disinherit you, I'll unget you! and d—n me! if ever I call you Jack again! [*Exeunt severally.*

SCENE II.

The North Parade.

Enter LUCY.

Lucy. Sir Lucius is generally more punctual, when he expects to hear from his dear Delia, as he calls her:—I wonder he's not here!—

Enter SIR LUCIUS O'TRIGGER.

Sir L. Hah! my little ambassadress—upon my conscience I have been looking for you; I have been on the South Parade this half hour.

Lucy. [*Speaking simply.*] O gemini! and I have been waiting for your worship here on the North.

Sir L. 'Faith! may be that was the reason we did not meet; and it is very comical too, how you could go out, and I not see you—for I was only taking a nap at the Parade Coffee-house, and I chose the window, on purpose that I might not miss you.

Lucy. My stars! Now I'd wager a sixpence I went by while you were asleep.

Sir L. Sure enough it must have been so—and I never dreamt it was so late, till I waked. Well, but my little girl, have you got nothing for me?

Lucy. Yes, but I have—I've got a letter for you in my pocket.

Sir L. O 'faith! I guessed you weren't come empty-handed—well—let me see what the dear creature says.

Lucy. There, Sir Lucius. [*Gives him a Letter.*

Sir L. [Reads.] *Sir—There is often a sudden incentive impulse in love, that has a greater induction than years of domestic combination: such was the commotion I felt at the first superfluous view of Sir Lucius O'Trigger.* Very pretty, upon my word! *Female punctuation forbids me to say more; yet let me add, that it will give me joy infallible to find Sir Lucius worthy the last criterion of my affections.* DELIA.

Upon my conscience, Lucy, your lady is a great mistress of language! 'Faith! she's quite the queen of the dictionary!

Lucy. Ay, sir, a lady of her experience.

Sir L. Experience! what, at seventeen?

Lucy. O, true, sir,—but then she reads so—my stars! how she will read off hand!

Sir L. 'Faith, she must be very deep read, to write this way—though she is rather an arbitrary writer, too—for here are a great many poor words pressed into the service of this note, that would get their habeas corpus from any court in Christendom. However, when affection guides the pen, he must be a brute who finds fault with the style.

Lucy. Ah, Sir Lucius, if you were to hear how she talks of you!

Sir L. Oh, tell her, I'll make her the best husband

in the world, and Lady O'Trigger into the bargain! —But we must get the old gentlewoman's consent—and do every thing fairly.

Lucy. Nay, Sir Lucius, I thought you wan't rich enough to be so nice!

Sir L. Upon my word, young woman, you have hit it:—I am so poor, that I can't afford to do a dirty action. If I did not want money, I'd steal your mistress and her fortune with a great deal of pleasure. However, my pretty girl, [*Gives her money.*] here's a little something to buy you a ribband; and meet me in the evening, and I will give you an answer to this. So, hussy, take a kiss beforehand, to put you in mind. [*Kisses her.*

Lucy. O lud! Sir Lucius—I never seed such a gemman! My lady won't like you if you're so impudent.

Sir L. 'Faith she will, Lucy—that same—pho! what's the name of it?—modesty—is a quality in a lover more praised by the women than liked; so, if your mistress asks you whether Sir Lucius ever gave you a kiss, tell her fifty, my dear.

Lucy. What, would you have me tell her a lie?

Sir L. Ah then, you baggage! I'll make it a truth presently.

Lucy. For shame now; here is some one coming.

Sir L. O 'faith I'll quiet your conscience!

[*Sees* FAG.—*Exit, humming a tune.*

Enter FAG.

Fag. So, so, ma'am. I humbly beg pardon.

Lucy. O lud!—now, Mr Fag—you flurry one so!

Fag. Come, come, Lucy, here's no one by—so a little less simplicity, with a grain or two more sincerity, if you please—You play false with us, madam—I saw you give the baronet a letter.—My master shall know this—and if he don't call him out—I will.

Lucy. Ha! ha! ha! you gentlemen's gentlemen are so hasty!—That letter was from Mrs Malaprop, simpleton.—She is taken with Sir Lucius's address.

Fag. How! what tastes some people have! Why, I suppose I have walked by her window a hundred times.—But what says our young lady?—any message to my master?

Lucy. Sad news, Mr Fag! A worse rival than Acres! Sir Anthony Absolute has proposed his son.

Fag. What, Captain Absolute?

Lucy. Even so. I overheard it all.

Fag. Ha! ha! ha! very good, 'faith! Good b'ye, Lucy, I must away with this news.

Lucy. Well, you may laugh, but it is true, I assure you. [*Going.*] But, Mr Fag, tell your master not to be cast down by this.

Fag. Oh, he'll be so disconsolate!

Lucy. And charge him not to think of quarrelling with young Absolute.

Fag. Never fear—never fear.

Lucy. Be sure, bid him keep up his spirits.

Fag. We will—we will. [*Exeunt severally.*

ACT THE THIRD.

SCENE I.

The North Parade.

Enter CAPTAIN ABSOLUTE.

Capt. Abs. 'Tis just as Fag told me, indeed!—Whimsical enough, 'faith! My father wants to

force me to marry the very girl I am plotting to run away with! He must not know of my connection with her yet awhile. He has too summary a method of proceeding in these matters; however I'll read my recantation instantly. My conversion is something sudden, indeed; but, I can assure him, it is very sincere—— So, so, here he comes—he looks plaguy gruff!

[*Steps aside.*

Enter SIR ANTHONY ABSOLUTE.

Sir Anth. No—I'll die sooner than forgive him! Die, did I say? I'll live these fifty years, to plague him. At our last meeting, his impudence had almost put me out of temper—An obstinate, passionate, self-willed boy! Who can he take after? This is my return for getting him before all his brothers and sisters! for putting him, at twelve years old, into a marching regiment, and allowing him fifty pounds a-year, besides his pay, ever since! But I have done with him—he's any body's son for me—I never will see him more—never—never—never—never.

Capt. Abs. Now for a penitential face!

Sir Anth. Fellow, get out of my way!

Capt. Abs. Sir, you see a penitent before you.

Sir Anth. I see an impudent scoundrel before me.

Capt. Abs. A sincere penitent. I am come, sir, to acknowledge my error, and to submit entirely to your will.

Sir Anth. What's that?

Capt. Abs. I have been revolving, and reflecting, and considering on your past goodness, and kindness, and condescension to me.

Sir Anth. Well, sir?

Capt. Abs. I have been likewise weighing, and balancing, what you were pleased to mention, concerning duty, and obedience, and authority.

Sir Anth. Well, puppy?

Capt. Abs. Why, then, sir, the result of my reflec-

tions is,—a resolution to sacrifice every inclination of my own to your satisfaction.

Sir Anth. Why, now you talk sense, absolute sense; I never heard any thing more sensible in my life. Confound you! you shall be Jack again.

Capt. Abs. I am happy in the appellation.

Sir Anth. Why then, Jack, my dear Jack, I will now inform you who the lady really is. Nothing but your passion and violence, you silly fellow, prevented me telling you at first. Prepare, Jack, for wonder and rapture—prepare. What think you of Miss Lydia Languish?

Capt. Abs. Languish! What, the Languishes of Worcestershire?

Sir Anth. Worcestershire! no. Did you never meet Mrs Malaprop, and her niece, Miss Languish, who came into our country just before you were last ordered to your regiment?

Capt. Abs. Malaprop! Languish! I don't remember ever to have heard the names before. Yet, stay, I think I do recollect something—Languish—Languish——She squints, don't she?—A little red-haired girl?

Sir Anth. Squints!—A red-haired girl! Z—ds! no!

Capt. Abs. Then I must have forgot; it can't be the same person.

Sir Anth. Jack! Jack! what think you of blooming, love-breathing seventeen?

Capt. Abs. As to that, sir, I am quite indifferent; if I can please you in the matter, 'tis all I desire.

Sir Anth. Nay, but Jack, such eyes! such eyes! so innocently wild! so bashfully irresolute! Not a glance but speaks and kindles some thought of love! Then, Jack, her cheeks! her cheeks, Jack! so deeply blushing at the insinuations of her tell-tale eyes! Then, Jack, her lips! O, Jack, lips, smiling at their own discretion! and, if not smiling, more sweetly

pouting—more lovely in sullenness! Then, Jack, her neck! O, Jack! Jack!

Capt. Abs. And which is to be mine, sir, the niece, or the aunt?

Sir Anth. Why, you unfeeling, insensible puppy, I despise you. When I was of your age, such a description would have made me fly like a rocket! The aunt, indeed! Odds life! when I ran away with your mother, I would not have touched any thing old or ugly to gain an empire.

Capt. Abs. Not to please your father, sir?

Sir Anth. To please my father——Z—ds! not to please—O, my father—Oddso!—yes, yes; if my father, indeed, had desired—that's quite another matter——Though he wasn't the indulgent father that I am, Jack.

Capt. Abs. I dare say not, sir.

Sir Anth. But, Jack, you are not sorry to find your mistress is so beautiful?

Capt. Abs. Sir, I repeat it, if I please you in this affair, 'tis all I desire. Not that I think a woman the worse for being handsome; but, sir, if you please to recollect, you before hinted something about a hump or two, one eye, and a few more graces of that kind—now, without being very nice, I own I should rather chuse a wife of mine to have the usual number of limbs, and a limited quantity of back; and, though one eye may be very agreeable, yet, as the prejudice has always run in favour of two, I would not wish to affect a singularity in that article.

Sir Anth. What a phlegmatic sot it is! Why, sirrah, you are an anchorite! A vile, insensible stock! You a soldier! you're a walking block, fit only to dust the company's regimentals on! Odds life, I've a great mind to marry the girl myself!

Capt. Abs. I am entirely at your disposal, sir; if you should think of addressing Miss Languish yourself, I suppose you would have me marry the aunt;

or, if you should change your mind, and take the old lady,—'tis the same to me, I'll marry the niece.

Sir Anth. Upon my word, Jack, thou'rt either a very great hypocrite, or—but, come, I know your indifference on such a subject must be all a lie, I'm sure it must—come, now, damn your demure face! come, confess, Jack, you have been lying—ha'n't you? You have been playing the hypocrite, hey?—I'll never forgive you, if you ha'n't been lying and playing the hypocrite.

Capt. Abs. I'm sorry, sir, that the respect and duty which I bear to you should be so mistaken.

Sir Anth. Hang your respect and duty! But, come along with me, I'll write a note to Mrs Malaprop, and you shall visit the lady directly. Her eyes shall be the Promethean torch to you—come along, I'll never forgive you, if you don't come back, stark mad with rapture and impatience—if you don't, 'egad, I'll marry the girl myself! [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

JULIA'S *Dressing-Room.*

Enter FAULKLAND.

Faulk. They told me Julia would return directly; I wonder she is not yet come!—How mean does this captious, unsatisfied temper of mine appear to my cooler judgment! What tender, honest joy sparkled in her eyes when we met! How delicate was the warmth of her expressions!—I was ashamed to appear less happy, though I had come resolved to wear a face of coolness and upbraiding. Sir Anthony's presence prevented my proposed expostulations: Yet

I must be satisfied that she has not been so very happy in my absence. She is coming—Yes, I know the nimbleness of her tread, when she thinks her impatient Faulkland counts the moments of her stay.

Enter JULIA.

Julia. I had not hoped to see you again so soon.

Faulk. Could I, Julia, be contented with my first welcome, restrained as we were, by the presence of a third person?

Julia. Oh, Faulkland! when your kindness can make me thus happy, let me not think that I discovered something of coldness in your first salutation.

Faulk. 'Twas but your fancy, Julia. I was rejoiced to see you—to see you in such health: Sure I had no cause for coldness?

Julia. Nay, then, I see you have taken something ill: You must not conceal from me what it is.

Faulk. Well, then, shall I own to you, that my joy at hearing of your health and arrival here, by your neighbour Acres, was somewhat damped, by his dwelling much on the high spirits you had enjoyed in Devonshire; on your mirth—your singing—dancing—and I know not what! For such is my temper, Julia, that I should regard every mirthful moment, in your absence, as a treason to constancy. The mutual tear, that steals down the cheek of parting lovers, is a compact, that no smile shall live there till they meet again.

Julia. Must I never cease to tax my Faulkland with this teazing, minute caprice? Can the idle reports of a silly boor weigh, in your breast, against my tried affection?

Faulk. They have no weight with me, Julia: No, no, I am happy, if you have been so—yet only say that you did not sing with mirth,—say that you thought of Faulkland in the dance.

Julia. I never can be happy in your absence. If I wear a countenance of content, it is to show that my mind holds no doubt of my Faulkland's truth. If I seemed sad, it were to make malice triumph, and say, that I had fixed my heart on one who left me to lament his roving and my own credulity. Believe me, Faulkland, I mean not to upbraid you when I say, that I have often dressed sorrow in smiles, lest my friends should guess whose unkindness had caused my tears.

Faulk. You were ever all goodness to me! Oh, I am a brute, when I but admit a doubt of your true constancy!

Julia. If ever without such cause from you, as I will not suppose possible, you find my affections veering but a point, may I become a proverbial scoff for levity and base ingratitude!

Faulk. Ah, Julia! that last word is grating to me! I would I had no title to your gratitude! Search your heart, Julia; perhaps what you have mistaken for love, is but the warm effusion of a too thankful heart!

Julia. For what quality must I love you?

Faulk. For no quality: To regard me for any quality of mind or understanding were only to esteem me! And for person—I have often wished myself deformed, to be convinced that I owed no obligation there for any part of your affection.

Julia. Where nature has bestowed a show of nice attention in the features of a man, he should laugh at it as misplaced. I have seen men, who, in this vain article, perhaps, might rank above you; but my heart has never asked my eyes if it were so or not.

Faulk. Now, this is not well from you, Julia; I despise person in a man, yet, if you loved me as I wish, though I were an Æthiop, you'd think none so fair.

Julia. I see you are determined to be unkind——. The contract, which my poor father bound us in, gives you more than a lover's privilege.

Faulk. Again, Julia, you raise ideas that feed and justify my doubts. I would not have been more free——no, I am proud of my restraint: Yet——yet, perhaps, your high respect alone for this solemn compact has fettered your inclinations, which, else, had made a worthier choice.

Julia. Then try me now——Let us be free as strangers as to what is past: My heart will not feel more liberty.

Faulk. There, now! so hasty, Julia! so anxious to be free! If your love for me were fixed and ardent, you would not loose your hold, even though I wished it!

Julia. Oh, you torture me to the heart! I cannot bear it!

Faulk. I do not mean to distress you: If I loved you less, I should never give you an uneasy moment. ——But hear me——All my fretful doubts arise from this——Women are not used to weigh and separate the motives of their affections: the cold dictates of prudence, gratitude, or filial duty, may sometimes be mistaken for the pleadings of the heart. I would not boast, yet let me say, that I have neither age, person, or character, to found dislike on; my fortune such, as few ladies could be charged with indiscretion in the match. O, Julia! when love receives such countenance from prudence, nice minds will be suspicious of its birth.

Julia. I know not whither your insinuations would tend; but, as they seem pressing to insult me, I will spare you the regret of having done so——I have given you no cause for this! [*Exit in tears.*

Faulk. In tears! stay, Julia——stay but for a moment——The door is fastened! Julia! my soul! but for one moment!——I hear her sobbing! 'Sdeath!

what a brute am I to use her thus!—Yet stay—Ay, she is coming now: how little resolution there is in woman! how a few soft words can turn them!—No, 'faith, she's not coming either! Why, Julia, my love! say but that you forgive me; come but to tell me that—now, this is being too resentful!—stay, she is coming too; I thought she would—no steadiness in any thing! her going away must have been a mere trick then; she sha'n't see that I was hurt by it—I'll affect indifference: [*Hums a tune, then listens.*]—No, Z—ds! she's not coming, nor don't intend it, I suppose! This is not steadiness, but obstinacy! Yet I deserve it. What, after so long an absence, to quarrel with her tenderness! 'twas barbarous and unmanly!—I should be ashamed to see her now.—I'll wait till her just resentment is abated, and when I distress her so again, may I lose her for ever! [*Exit.*

SCENE III.

MRS MALAPROP'S *Lodging.*

MRS MALAPROP, *with a Letter in her Hand, and* CAPTAIN ABSOLUTE.

Mrs M. Your being Sir Anthony's son, captain, would itself be a sufficient accommodation; but from the ingenuity of your appearance, I am convinced you deserve the character here given of you.

Capt. Abs. Permit me to say, madam, that, as I never yet have had the pleasure of seeing Miss Languish, my principal inducement in this affair, at present, is the honour of being allied to Mrs Malaprop, of whose intellectual accomplishments, elegant manners, and unaffected learning, no tongue is silent.

Mrs M. Sir, you do me infinite honour! I beg, captain, you'll be seated. (*Sit.*) Ah! few gentlemen, now-a-days, know how to value the ineffectual qualities in a woman! few think how a little knowledge becomes a gentlewomen! Men have no sense now but for the worthless flower of beauty!

Capt. Abs. It is but too true, indeed, ma'am; yet I fear our ladies should share the blame; they think our admiration of beauty so great, that knowledge, in them, would be superfluous. Thus, like garden trees, they seldom show fruit, till time has robbed them of the more specious blossom: Few, like Mrs Malaprop, and the orange-tree, are rich in both at once!

Mrs M. Sir, you overpower me with good breeding—He is the very pine-apple of politeness! You are not ignorant, captain, that this giddy girl has, somehow, contrived to fix her affections on a beggarly, strolling, eves-dropping ensign, whom none of us have seen, and nobody knows any thing of.

Capt. Abs. Oh, I have heard the silly affair before. I'm not at all prejudiced against her on that account, but it must be very distressing, indeed, ma'am.

Mrs M. Oh, it gives me the hydrostatics to such a degree!—I thought she had persisted from corresponding with him; but behold, this very day, I have interceded another letter from the fellow—I believe I have it in my pocket.

Capt. Abs. O, the devil! my last note! [*Aside.*

Mrs M. Ay, here it is.

Capt. Abs. Ay, my note, indeed! O, the little traitress, Lucy! [*Aside.*

Mrs M. There, perhaps you may know the writing. [*Gives him the Letter.*

Capt. Abs. I think I have seen the hand before—yes, I certainly must have seen this hand before.

Mrs M. Nay, but read it, captain.

Capt. Abs. [Reads.] *My soul's idol, my adored Lydia!*—Very tender, indeed!

Mrs M. Tender! ay, and profane too, o' my conscience!

Capt, Abs. *I am excessively alarmed at the intelligence you send me, the more so as my new rival*—

Mrs M. That's you, sir.

Capt. Abs. *Has universally the character of being an accomplished gentleman, and a man of honour.*—Well, that's handsome enough.

Mrs M. Oh, the fellow has some design in writing so.

Capt. Abs. That he had, I'll answer for him, ma'am.

Mrs M. But go on, sir—you'll see presently.

Capt. Abs. *As for the old weather-beaten she-dragon, who guards you*—Who can he mean by that?

Mrs M. Me, sir—me—he means me there—what do you think now?—but go on a little further.

Capt. Abs. Impudent scoundrel!—*It shall go hard but I will elude her vigilance; as I am told that the same ridiculous vanity, which makes her dress up her coarse features, and deck her dull chat with hard words which she don't understand*——

Mrs M. There, sir, an attack upon my language! what do you think of that?—an aspersion upon my parts of speech! was ever such a brute! Sure, if I reprehend any thing in this world, it is the use of my oracular tongue, and a nice derangement of epitaphs.

Capt. Abs. He deserves to be hanged and quartered! let me see—*same ridiculous vanity*——

Mrs M. You need not read it again, sir!

Capt. Abs. I beg pardon, ma'am—*does also lay her open to the grossest deceptions from flattery and pretended admiration*—an impudent coxcomb!—*so that I have a scheme to see you shortly, with the old Harridan's consent, and even to make her a go-between in our interviews.*——Was ever such assurance!

Mrs M. Did you ever hear any thing like it?—

He'll elude my vigilance, will he?—yes, yes!—ha! ha! he's very likely to enter these doors!—we'll try who can plot best!

Capt. Abs. So we will, ma'am—so we will.—Ha! ha! ha! a conceited puppy! ha! ha! ha!—Well, but, Mrs Malaprop, as the girl seems so infatuated by this fellow, suppose you were to wink at her corresponding with him for a little time—let her even plot an elopement with him—then do you connive at her escape—while I, just in the nick, will have the fellow laid by the heels, and fairly contrive to carry her off in his stead.

Mrs M. I am delighted with the scheme; never was any thing better perpetrated!

Capt. Abs. But, pray, could I not see the lady for a few minutes now?—I should like to try her temper a little.

Mrs M. Why, I don't know—I doubt she is not prepared for a visit of this kind.—There is a decorum in these matters.

Capt. Abs. O Lord, she won't mind me!—only tell her, Beverley——

Mrs M. Sir!

Capt. Abs. Gently, good tongue! [*Aside.*

Mrs M. What did you say of Beverley?

Capt. Abs. Oh, I was going to propose that you should tell her, by way of jest, that it was Beverley who was below—she'd come down fast enough then—ha! ha! ha!

Mrs M. 'Twould be a trick she well deserves—besides, you know the fellow tells her he'll get my consent to see her—ha! ha!—Let him if he can, I say again.—Lydia, come down here! [*Calling.*] He'll make me a go-between in their interviews!—ha! ha! ha! Come down, I say, Lydia!—I don't wonder at your laughing—ha! ha! ha! his impudence is truly ridiculous!

Capt. Abs. 'Tis very ridiculous, upon my soul, ma'am!—ha! ha! ha!

Mrs M. The little hussy won't hear.—Well, I'll go and tell her at once who it is—she shall know that Captain Absolute is come to wait on her.—And I'll make her behave as becomes a young woman.

Capt. Abs. As you please, ma'am.

Mrs M. For the present, captain, your servant.—Ah, you've not done laughing yet, I see—elude my vigilance! yes, yes—Ha! ha! ha! [*Exit.*

Capt. Abs. Ha! ha! ha! one would think, now, that I might throw off all disguise at once, and seize my prize with security—but such is Lydia's caprice, that, to undeceive, were probably to lose her.—I'll see whether she knows me.

[*Walks aside, and seems engaged in looking at the Pictures.*

Enter LYDIA.

Lydia. What a scene am I now to go through! surely nothing can be more dreadful than to be obliged to listen to the loathsome addresses of a stranger to one's heart.—I have heard of girls persecuted, as I am, who have appealed, in behalf of their favoured lover, to the generosity of his rival: suppose I were to try it—there stands the hated rival—an officer too!—but, Oh, how unlike my Beverley!—I wonder he don't begin—truly, he seems a very negligent wooer!—quite at his ease, upon my word!—I'll speak first—Mr Absolute!

Capt. Abs. Ma'am. [*Turns round.*

Lydia. O heavens! Beverley!

Capt. Abs. Hush!—hush, my life!—softly! be not surprised!

Lydia. I am so astonished! and so terrified! and

so overjoyed!—for Heaven's sake, how came you here?

Capt. Abs. Briefly—I have deceived your aunt—I was informed that my new rival was to visit here this evening, and, contriving to have him kept away, have passed myself on her for Captain Absolute.

Lydia. Oh, charming!—And she really takes you for young Absolute?

Capt. Abs. Oh, she's convinced of it.

Lydia. Ha! ha! ha! I can't forbear laughing, to think how her sagacity is over-reached!

Capt. Abs. But we trifle with our precious moments—such another opportunity may not occur—then let me now conjure my kind, my condescending angel, to fix the time when I may rescue her from undeserving persecution, and, with a licensed warmth, plead for my reward.

Lydia. Will you then, Beverley, consent to forfeit that portion of my paltry wealth?—that burden on the wings of love?

Capt. Abs. Oh, come to me—rich only thus—in loveliness!—Bring no portion to me but thy love—'twill be generous in you, Lydia—for well you know, it is the only dower your poor Beverley can repay.

Lydia. How persuasive are his words!—how charming will poverty be with him!

Enter MRS MALAPROP, *listening.*

Mrs M. I am impatient to know how the little hussy deports herself. [*Aside.*

Capt. Abs. So pensive, Lydia!—is then your warmth abated?

Mrs M. Warmth abated?—so!—she has been in a passion, I suppose.

Lydia. No—nor ever can, while I have life.

Mrs M. An ill-temper'd little devil!—She'll be in a passion all her life, will she?

Lydia. Let her choice be Captain Absolute, but Beverley is mine.

Mrs M. I am astonished at her assurance!—to his face—this to his face!

Capt. Abs. Thus, then, let me enforce my suit. [*Kneeling.*

Mrs M. Ay—poor young man!—down on his knees, entreating for pity!—I can contain no longer.—Why, thou vixen!—I have overheard you.

Capt. Abs. Oh, confound her vigilance! [*Aside.*

Mrs M. Captain Absolute—I know not how to apologise for her shocking rudeness.

Capt. Abs. So—all's safe, I find. [*Aside.*] I have hopes, madam, that time will bring the young lady—

Mrs M. O, there's nothing to be hoped for from her! she's as headstrong as an allegory on the banks of the Nile.

Lydia. Nay, madam, what do you charge me with now?

Mrs M. Why, thou unblushing rebel—didn't you tell this gentleman to his face, that you loved another better?—didn't you say you never would be his?

Lydia. No, madam, I did not.

Mrs M. Good heavens, what assurance!—Lydia, Lydia, you ought to know that lying don't become a young woman!—Didn't you boast that Beverley—that stroller, Beverley—possessed your heart?—Tell me that, I say.

Lydia. 'Tis true, ma'am, and none but Beverley—

Mrs M. Hold!—hold, assurance!—you shall not be so rude.

Capt. Abs. Nay, pray, Mrs Malaprop, don't stop the young lady's speech:—she's very welcome to talk thus—it does not hurt me in the least, I assure you.

Mrs M. You are too good, captain—too amiably patient;—but come with me, miss—let us see you again soon, captain—remember what we have fixed.

Capt. Abs. I shall, ma'am.

Mrs. M. Come, take a graceful leave of the gentleman.

Lydia. May every blessing wait on my Beverley, my loved Bev——

Mrs M. Hussy! I'll choak the word in your throat!—Come along—come along.

[*Exeunt severally*—CAPTAIN ABSOLUTE *kissing his Hand to* LYDIA, MRS MALAPROP *stopping her speaking.*

SCENE IV.

ACRES'S *Lodgings.*

ACRES *and* DAVID *discovered*—ACRES *as just dressed.*

Acres. Indeed, David—dress does make a difference, David.

David. 'Tis all in all, I think—difference! why, an' you were to go now to Clod Hall, I am certain the old lady wouldn't know you: Master Butler wouldn't believe his own eyes, and Mrs Pickle would cry, "Lard, presarve me!" our dairy maid would come giggling to the door, and I warrant Dolly Tester, your honour's favourite, would blush like my waistcoat—Oons! I'll hold a gallon, there an't a dog in the house but would bark, and I question whether Phillis would wag a hair of her tail!

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Acres. Ay, David, there's nothing like polishing.

David. So I says of your honour's boots; but the boy never heeds me!

Acres. But, David, has Mr De la Grace been here? I must rub up my balancing, and chasing, and boring.

David. I'll call again, sir.

Acres. Do—and see if there are any letters for me at the post-office.

David. I will.—By the mass, I can't help looking at your head!—if I hadn't been by at the cooking, I wish I may die if I should have known the dish again myself! [*Exit.*

[ACRES *comes forward, practising a dancing Step.*

Acres. Sink, slide—coupee—Confound the first inventors of cotillions, say I!—they are as bad as algebra to us country gentlemen—I can walk a minuet easy enough, when I am forced!—and I have been accounted a good stick in a country-dance.—Odds jiggs and tabors!—I never valued your cross-over two couple—figure in—right and left—and I'd foot it with e'er a captain in the country!—but these outlandish heathen allemandes and cotillions are quite beyond me!—I shall never prosper at them, that's sure—mine are true-born English legs—they don't understand their cursed French lingo!—their *pàs* this, and *pàs* that, and *pàs* t'other!—damme! my feet don't like to be called paws!

Enter DAVID.

David. Here is Sir Lucius O'Trigger to wait on you, sir.

Acres. Show him in. [*Exit* DAVID.

Enter SIR LUCIUS O'TRIGGER.

Sir L. Mr Acres, I am delighted to embrace you.

Acres. My dear Sir Lucius, I kiss your hands.

Sir L. Pray, my friend, what has brought you so suddenly to Bath?

Acres. 'Faith, I have followed Cupid's Jack-a-Lantern, and find myself in a quagmire at last!—In short, I have been very ill used, Sir Lucius. I don't chuse to mention names, but look on me as a very ill-used gentleman.

Sir L. Pray, what is the case?—I ask no names.

Acres. Mark me, Sir Lucius; I fall as deep as need be in love with a young lady—her friends take my part—I follow her to Bath—send word of my arrival; and receive answer, that the lady is to be otherwise disposed of. This, Sir Lucius, I call being ill-used.

Sir L. Very ill, upon my conscience!—Pray, can you divine the cause of it?

Acres. Why, there's the matter; she has another lover, one Beverley, who, I am told, is now in Bath. —Odds slanders and lies! he must be at the bottom of it.

Sir L. A rival in the case, is there?—and you think he has supplanted you unfairly?

Acres. Unfairly! to be sure he has. He never could have done it fairly.

Sir L. Then sure you know what is to be done!

Acres. Not I, upon my soul!

Sir L. We wear no swords here, but you understand me?

Acres. What! fight him!

Sir L. Ay, to be sure: what can I mean else?

Acres. But he has given me no provocation.

Sir L. Now, I think he has given you the greatest provocation in the world. Can a man commit a more heinous offence against another, than to fall in love with the same woman? Oh, by my soul, it is the most unpardonable breach of friendship.

Acres. Breach of friendship! Ay, ay; but I have

no acquaintance with this man. I never saw him in my life.

Sir L. That's no argument at all—he has the less right then to take such a liberty.

Acres. 'Gad, that's true—I grow full of anger, Sir Lucius!—I fire apace! odds hilts and blades! I find a man may have a deal of valour in him, and not know it! But couldn't I contrive to have a little right of my side?

Sir L. What the devil signifies right when your honour is concerned? do you think Achilles, or my little Alexander the Great, ever enquired where the right lay? No, by my soul, they drew their broadswords, and left the lazy sons of peace to settle the justice of it.

Acres. Your words are a grenadier's march to my heart! I believe courage must be catching!—I certainly do feel a kind of valour arising as it were—a kind of courage, as I may say—odds flints, pans, and triggers! I'll challenge him directly.

Sir L. Ah, my little friend! if I had Blunderbuss Hall here—I could show you a range of ancestry, in the O'Trigger line, that would furnish the New Room, every one of whom had killed his man!—For though the mansion-house and dirty acres have slipped through my fingers, I thank Heaven our honour and the family pictures are as fresh as ever.

Acres. Oh, Sir Lucius, I have had ancestors too!—every man of them colonel or captain in the militia!—odds balls and barrels! say no more—I'm braced for it.—The thunder of your words has soured the milk of human kindness in my breast!—Z—ds! as the man in the play says, "I could do such deeds!"

Sir L. Come, come, there must be no passion at all in the case—these things should always be done civilly.

Acres. I must be in a passion, Sir Lucius—I must be in a rage—Dear Sir Lucius, let me be in a rage, if

you love me.——Come, here's pen and paper. [*Sits down to write.*] I would the ink were red!—Indite, I say, indite!—How shall I begin? Odds bullets and blades! I'll write a good bold hand, however.

Sir. L. Pray, compose yourself.

Acres. Come—now, shall I begin with an oath? Do, Sir Lucius, let me begin with a damme!

Sir L. Pho! pho! do the thing decently, and like a Christian. Begin now—*Sir*—

Acres. That's too civil by half.

Sir L. *To prevent the confusion that might arise*—

Acres. Well—

Sir L. *From our both addressing the same lady*——

Acres. Ay—there's the reason—*same lady*—— Well—

Sir L. *I shall expect the honour of your company*—

Acres. Z—ds! I'm not asking him to dinner!

Sir L. Pray, be easy.

Acres. Well, then, *honour of your company*——

Sir L. *To settle our pretensions*—

Acres. Well—

Sir L. Let me see—ay, King's Mead-Fields will do—*in King's Mead-Fields.*

Acres. So, that's done.—Well, I'll fold it up presently; my own crest—a hand and dagger, shall be the seal.

Sir L. You see, now, this little explanation will put a stop at once to all confusion or misunderstanding that might arise between you.

Acres. Ay, we fight to prevent any misunderstanding.

Sir L. Now, I'll leave you to fix your own time.—Take my advice, and you'll decide it this evening if you can; then, let the worst come of it, 'twill be off your mind to-morrow.

Acres. Very true.

Sir L. So I shall see nothing more of you, unless it be by letter, till the evening.—I would do myself

the honour to carry your message; but, to tell you a secret, I believe I shall have just such another affair on my own hands. There is a gay captain here who put a jest on me lately at the expence of my country, and I only want to fall in with the gentleman to call him out.

Acres. By my valour, I should like to see you fight first! Odds life, I should like to see you kill him, if it was only to get a little lesson!

Sir L. I shall be very proud of instructing you.—Well, for the present——but remember now, when you meet your antagonist, do every thing in a mild and agreeable manner.—Let your courage be as keen, but at the same time as polished, as your sword.

[*Exeunt severally.*

ACT THE FOURTH.

SCENE I.

ACRES's *Lodgings.*

ACRES *and* DAVID.

David. Then, by the mass, sir, I would do no such thing!—ne'er a Sir Lucius O'Trigger in the kingdom should make me fight when I wa'n't so minded. Oons! what will the old lady say when she hears o't!

Acres. But my honour, David, my honour! I must be very careful of my honour.

David. Ay, by the mass! and I would be very careful of it, and I think in return my honour couldn't do less than to be very careful of me.

Acres. Odds blades! David, no gentleman will ever risk the loss of his honour!

David. I say, then, it would be but civil in honour never to risk the loss of a gentleman.—Look ye, master, this honour seems to me to be a marvellous false friend; ay, truly, a very courtier-like servant.—Put the case, I was a gentleman (which, thank God, no one can say of me); well—my honour makes me quarrel with another gentleman of my acquaintance.—So—we fight. (Pleasant enough that) Boh!—I kill him—(the more's my luck). Now, pray, who gets the profit of it?—why, my honour.—But put the case that he kills me! by the mass! I go to the worms, and my honour whips over to my enemy.

Acres. No, David, in that case!—Odds crowns and laurels! your honour follows you to the grave!

David. Now, that's just the place where I could make a shift to do without it.

Acres. Z—ds! David, you are a coward!—It doesn't become my valour to listen to you.—What, shall I disgrace my ancestors?—Think of that, David—think what it would be to disgrace my ancestors?

David. Under favour, the surest way of not disgracing them is to keep as long as you can out of their company. Look ye now, master, to go to them in such haste—with an ounce of lead in your brains—I should think it might as well be let alone. Our ancestors are very good kind of folks; but they are the last people I should chuse to have a visiting acquaintance with.

Acres. But, David, now, you don't think there is such very, very, very great danger, hey?—Odds life! people often fight without any mischief done!

David. By the mass, I think 'tis ten to one against you!—Oons! here to meet some lion-headed fellow,

I warrant, with his d—ned double-barrelled swords and cut-and-thrust pistols! Lord bless us! it makes me tremble to think o't——those be such desperate bloody-minded weapons: well, I never could abide them!—from a child I never could fancy them!—I suppose there an't been so merciless a beast in the world as your loaded pistol!

Acres. Z—ds! I won't be afraid—odds fire and fury! you sha'n't make me afraid.—Here is the challenge, and I have sent for my dear friend, Jack Absolute, to carry it for me.

David. Ay, i'the name of mischief, let him be the messenger.—For my part, I wouldn't lend a hand to it for the best horse in your stable. By the mass! it don't look like another letter!—it is, as I may say, a designing and malicious-looking letter!—and I warrant smells of gunpowder, like a soldier's pouch!—Oons! I wouldn't swear it mayn't go off!

Acres. Out, you poltroon!—you ha'n't the valour of a grasshopper.

David. Well, I say no more—'twill be sad news, to be sure, at Clod Hall!—but I ha' done.—How Phillis will howl when she hears of it!—ay, poor bitch, she little thinks what shooting her master's going after!—and I warrant old Crop, who has carried your honour, field and road, these ten years, will curse the hour he was born! [*Whimpering.*

Acres. It won't do, David—I am determined to fight—so get along, you coward, while I'm in the mind.

David. Good b'ye, master. [*Whimpering.*

Acres. Get along, you cowardly, dastardly, croaking raven! [*Exit* DAVID.

Enter CAPTAIN ABSOLUTE.

Capt. Abs. What's the matter, Bob?

Acres. A vile, sheep-hearted blockhead!—If I hadn't the valour of St George, and the dragon to boot—

Capt. Abs. But what did you want with me, Bob?

Acres. Oh!—there— [*Gives him the Challenge.*

Capt. Abs. *To Ensign Beverley,* So—what's going on now! [*Aside*] Well, what's this?

Acres. A challenge!

Capt. Abs. Indeed!—Why, you won't fight him, will you, Bob?

Acres. 'Egad, but I will, Jack.—Sir Lucius has wrought me to it. He has left me full of rage—and I'll fight this evening, that so much good passion mayn't be wasted.

Capt. Abs. But what have I to do with this?

Acres. Why, as I think you know something of this fellow, I want you to find him out for me, and give him this mortal defiance.

Capt. Abs. Well, give it me, and trust me he gets it.

Acres. Thank you, my dear friend, my dear Jack; but it is giving you a great deal of trouble.

Capt. Abs. Not in the least—I beg you won't mention it.—No trouble in the world, I assure you.

Acres. You are very kind.—What it is to have a friend!—you couldn't be my second,—could you, Jack?

Capt. Abs. Why no, Bob—not in this affair—it would not be quite so proper.

Acres. Well, then, I must get my friend Sir Lucius. I shall have your good wishes, however, Jack?

Capt. Abs. Whenever he meets you, believe me.

Enter SERVANT.

Serv. Sir Anthony Absolute is below, enquiring for the captain.

Capt. Abs. I'll come instantly. Well, my little hero, success attend you. [*Going.*

Acres. Stay, stay, Jack.—If Beverley should ask you what kind of a man your friend Acres is, do tell him I am a devil of a fellow—will you, Jack?

Capt. Abs. To be sure I shall. I'll say you are a determined dog—hey, Bob?

Acres. Ay, do, do—and if that frightens him, 'egad, perhaps he mayn't come. So tell him I generally kill a man a week; will you, Jack?

Capt. Abs. I will, I will; I'll say you are called, in the country, "Fighting Bob."

Acres. Right, right—'tis all to prevent mischief; for I don't want to take his life, if I clear my honour.

Capt. Abs. No!—that's very kind of you.

Acres. Why, you don't wish me to kill him, do you, Jack?

Capt. Abs. No, upon my soul, I do not. But a devil of a fellow, hey? [*Going.*

Acres. True, true—But stay—stay, Jack—you may add, that you never saw me in such a rage before—a most devouring rage!

Capt. Abs. I will, I will.

Acres. Remember, Jack—a determined dog!

Capt. Abs. Ay, ay, "Fighting Bob."

[*Exeunt severally.*

SCENE II.

MRS MALAPROP'S *Lodgings.*

MRS MALAPROP *and* LYDIA.

Mrs M. Why, thou perverse one!—tell me what you can object to him?—Isn't he a handsome man?—tell me that.—A genteel man? a pretty figure of a man?

Lydia. She little thinks whom she is praising! [*Aside.*] So is Beverley, ma'am.

Mrs M. No caparisons, miss, if you please.—

Caparisons don't become a young woman.—No! Captain Absolute is, indeed, a fine gentleman.

Lydia. Ay, the Captain Absolute you have seen. [*Aside.*

Mrs. M. Then he's so well bred;—so full of alacrity and adulation!—I protest, when I saw him, I thought of what Hamlet says in the play:—"Hesperian curls—the front of Job himself!—an eye, like March, to threaten at command!—a station, like Harry Mercury, new"—Something about kissing—on a hill—however, the similitude struck me directly.

Lydia. How enraged she'll be presently, when she discovers her mistake! [*Aside.*

Enter SERVANT.

Serv. Sir Anthony and Captain Absolute are below, ma'am.

Mrs M. Show them up here. [*Exit* SERVANT.] Now, Lydia, I insist on your behaving as becomes a young woman.—Show your good breeding, at least, though you have forgot your duty.

Lydia. Madam, I have told you my resolution!—I shall not only give him no encouragement, but I won't even speak to, or look at him.

[*Flings herself into a Chair, with her Face from the Door.*

Enter SIR ANTHONY *and* CAPTAIN ABSOLUTE.

Sir Anth. Here we are, Mrs Malaprop; come to mitigate the frowns of unrelenting beauty—and difficulty enough I had to bring this fellow—I don't know what's the matter, but if I had not held him by force, he'd have given me the slip.

Mrs M. You have infinite trouble, Sir Anthony, in the affair.—I am ashamed for the cause! Lydia, Lydia, rise, I beseech you! pay your respects!

[*Aside to her.*

Sir Anth. I hope, madam, that Miss Languish has

reflected on the worth of this gentleman, and the regard due to her aunt's choice, and my alliance.—Now, Jack, speak to her. [*Aside to him.*

Capt. Abs. What the devil shall I do?—[*Aside.*]—You see, sir, she won't even look at me whilst you are here.—I knew she wouldn't!—I told you so—Let me entreat you, sir, to leave us together!

[CAPTAIN ABSOLUTE *seems to expostulate with his Father.*

Lydia. [*Aside.*] I wonder I ha'n't heard my aunt exclaim yet! sure she can't have looked at him! perhaps their regimentals are alike, and she is something blind.

Sir Anth. I say, sir, I won't stir a foot yet.

Mrs M. I am sorry to say, Sir Anthony, that my affluence over my niece is very small.—Turn round, Lydia, I blush for you! [*Aside to her.*

Sir Anth. May I not flatter myself, that Miss Languish will assign what cause of dislike she can have to my son!—why don't you begin, Jack?—Speak, you puppy—speak! [*Aside to him.*

Mrs M. It is impossible, Sir Anthony, she can have any.—She will not say she has.—Answer, hussy! why don't you answer? [*Aside to her.*

Sir Anth. Then, madam, I trust that a childish and hasty predilection will be no bar to Jack's happiness.—Z—ds! sirrah! why don't you speak?

[*Aside to him.*

Lydia. [*Aside.*] I think my lover seems as little inclined to conversation as myself.—How strangely blind my aunt must be!

Capt. Abs. Hem! hem! Madam—hem! [ABSOLUTE *attempts to speak, and returns to* SIR ANTHONY]—'Faith! sir, I am so confounded!—and so—so—confused!—I told you I should be so, sir,—I knew it—The—the—tremor of my passion entirely takes away my presence of mind.

Sir Anth. But it don't take away your voice, fool, does it?—Go up, and speak to her directly!

[ABSOLUTE *makes signs to* MRS MALAPROP *to leave them together.*

Mrs M. Sir Anthony, shall we leave them together?—Ah! you stubborn little vixen! [*Aside to her.*

Sir Anth. Not yet, ma'am, not yet!—what the devil are you at? unlock your jaws, sirrah, or—

[*Aside to him.*

Capt. Abs. [*Draws near* LYDIA.] Now Heaven send she may be too sullen to look round!—I must disguise my voice. [*Aside*—*Speaks in a low hoarse tone.*]—Will not Miss Languish lend an ear to the mild accents of true love?—Will not—

Sir Anth. What the devil ails the fellow?—Why don't you speak out?—not stand croaking like a frog in a quinsey!

Capt. Abs. The—the—excess of my awe, and my—my—my modesty, quite choak me!

Sir Anth. Ah! your modesty again!—I'll tell you what, Jack; if you don't speak out directly, and glibly too, I shall be in such a rage!—Mrs Malaprop, I wish the lady would favour us with something more than a side-front.

[MRS MALAPROP *seems to chide* LYDIA.

Capt. Abs. So!—all will out, I see!

[*Goes up to* LYDIA, *speaks softly.*

Be not surprised, my Lydia, suppress all surprise at present.

Lydia. [*Aside.*] Heavens! 'tis Beverley's voice!—Sure he can't have imposed on Sir Anthony too!

[*Looks round by degrees, then starts up.*

Is this possible!—my Beverley!—how can this be?—my Beverley?

Capt. Abs. Ah! 'tis all over! [*Aside.*

Sir Anth. Beverley!—the devil—Beverley!—What can the girl mean?—This is my son, Jack Absolute.

Mrs M. For shame, hussy! for shame!—your

head runs so on that fellow, that you have him always in your eyes!—beg Captain Absolute's pardon, directly.

Lydia. I see no Captain Absolute, but my loved Beverley!

Sir Anth. Z——ds, the girl's mad!—her brain's turned by reading!

Mrs M. O' my conscience, I believe so!—what do you mean by Beverley, hussy?—You saw Captain Absolute before to-day; there he is—your husband that shall be.

Lydia. With all my soul, ma'am—when I refuse my Beverley——

Sir Anth. O! she's as mad as Bedlam!—or has this fellow been playing us a rogue's trick!—Come here, sirrah, who the devil are you?

Capt. Abs. 'Faith, sir, I am not quite clear myself; but I'll endeavour to recollect.

Sir Anth. Are you my son or not?—answer for your mother, you dog, if you won't for me.

Mrs M. Ay, sir, who are you? O mercy! I begin to suspect!—

Capt. Abs. Ye powers of impudence, befriend me! [*Aside.*] Sir Anthony, most assuredly I am your wife's son; and that I sincerely believe myself to be yours also, I hope my duty has always shown.—Mrs Malaprop, I am your most respectful admirer—and shall be proud to add affectionate nephew.—I need not tell my Lydia, that she sees her faithful Beverley, who, knowing the singular generosity of her temper, assumed that name, and a station, which has proved a test of the most disinterested love, which he now hopes to enjoy in a more elevated character.

Lydia. So!—there will be no elopement after all! [*Sullenly.*

Sir Anth. Upon my soul, Jack, thou art a very impudent fellow! To do you justice, I think I never saw a piece of more consummate assurance!

Capt. Abs. Oh, you flatter me, sir,—you compliment—'tis my modesty you know, sir—my modesty, that has stood in my way.

Sir Anth. Well, I am glad you are not the dull insensible varlet you pretended to be, however!—I'm glad you have made a fool of your father, you dog—I am——So this was your penitence, your duty, and obedience!—I thought it was d—n'd sudden—you never heard their names before, not you!—What, the Languishes of Worcestershire, hey?—if you could please me in the affair, 'twas all you desired!—Ah! you dissembling villain!—What! [*Pointing to* LYDIA.] she squints, don't she?—a little red-haired girl!—hey?—Why, you hypocritical young rascal—I wonder you a'n't ashamed to hold up your head!

Capt. Abs. 'Tis with difficulty, sir—I am confused—very much confused, as you must perceive.

Mrs M. O lud! Sir Anthony!—a new light breaks in upon me!—hey!—how! what! Captain, did you write the letters then?—What!—am I to thank you for the elegant compilation of "an old weather-beaten she-dragon"—hey?—O mercy!—was it you that reflected on my parts of speech?

Capt. Abs. Dear sir!. my modesty will be overpowered at last, if you don't assist me.—I shall certainly not be able to stand it!

Sir Anth. Come, come, Mrs Malaprop, we must forget and forgive;—odds life! matters have taken so clever a turn all of a sudden, that I could find in my heart to be so good-humoured! and so gallant!—hey! Mrs Malaprop!

Mrs M. Well, Sir Anthony, since you desire it, we will not anticipate the past;—so mind, young people—our retrospection will now be all to the future.

Sir Anth. Come, we must leave them together; Mrs Malaprop, they long to fly into each other's arms, I warrant!—Jack—isn't the cheek as I said, hey?—and the eye, you rogue!—and the lip—hey? Come,

Mrs Malaprop, we'll not disturb their tenderness—theirs is the time of life for happiness!——"*Youth's the season made for joy*"—[*Sings.*]—hey!—Odds life! I'm in such spirits,—I don't know what I could not do!—Permit me, ma'am—[*Gives his Hand to* Mrs Malaprop; [*Sings.*] Tol-de-rol—'gad I should like to have a little fooling myself—Tol-de-rol! de-rol!

[*Exit singing, and handing* Mrs Malaprop. Lydia *sits sullenly in the Chair.*

Capt. Abs. So much thought bodes me no good [*Aside.*]—So grave, Lydia!

Lydia. Sir!

Capt. Abs. So! egad! I thought as much!—that damned monosyllable has froze me! [*Aside.*]—What, Lydia, now that we are as happy in our friends' consent as in our mutual vows——

Lydia. Friends' consent, indeed! [*Pecvishly.*

Capt. Abs. Come, come, we must lay aside some of our romance—a little wealth and comfort may be endured after all. And for your fortune, the lawyers shall make such settlements as——

Lydia. Lawyers! I hate lawyers!

Capt. Abs. Nay, then we will not wait for their lingering forms, but instantly procure the license, and——

Lydia. The license!—I hate a license!

Capt. Abs. Oh, my love! be not so unkind!—thus let me entreat—— [*Kneeling.*

Lydia. Pshaw!—what signifies kneeling, when you know I must have you?

Capt. Abs. [*Rising.*] Nay, madam, there shall be no constraint upon your inclinations, I promise you.—If I have lost your heart,—I resign the rest.—'Gad, I must try what a little spirit will do. [*Aside.*

Lydia. [*Rising.*] Then, sir, let me tell you, the interest you had there was acquired by a mean, unmanly imposition, and deserves the punishment of fraud.—What, you have been treating me like a child!

—humouring my romance! and laughing, I suppose, at your success!

Capt. Abs. You wrong me, Lydia, you wrong me —only hear——

Lydia. So, while I fondly imagined we were deceiving my relations, and flattered myself that I should outwit and incense them all—behold my hopes are to be crushed at once, by my aunt's consent and approbation—and I am myself the only dupe at last! [*Walking about in a Heat.*]—But here, sir, here is the picture—Beverley's picture! [*Taking a Miniature from her Bosom.*] which I have worn, night and day, in spite of threats and entreaties!—There, sir, [*Flings it to him.*] and be assured, I throw the original from my heart as easily.

Capt. Abs. Nay, nay, ma'am, we will not differ as to that—here, [*Taking out a Picture.*] here is Miss Lydia Languish,—What a difference!—ay, there is the heavenly assenting smile, that first gave soul and spirit to my hopes!—those are the lips which sealed a vow, as yet scarce dry in Cupid's kalendar!—and there the half-resentful blush, that would have checked the ardour of my thanks.—Well, all that's past; —all over, indeed!—There, madam—in beauty, that copy is not equal to you, but in my mind, its merit over the original, in being still the same, is such—that—I cannot find in my heart to part with it.

[*Puts it up again.*

Lydia, [*Softening.*] 'Tis your own doing, sir—I, I, I suppose you are perfectly satisfied.

Capt. Abs. Oh, most certainly—sure now, this is much better than being in love!—ha! ha! ha!—there's some spirit in this!—What signifies breaking some scores of solemn promises?—all that's of no consequence, you know—To be sure people will say, that Miss didn't know her own mind—but never mind that:—or, perhaps, they may be ill-natured enough to hint, that the gentleman grew tired of the lady, and forsook her—but don't let that fret you.

Lydia. There's no bearing this insolence?
[*Bursts into tears.*

Enter MRS MALAPROP *and* SIR ANTHONY.

Mrs M. [*Entering.*] Come, we must interrupt your billing and cooing a while.

Lydia. This is worse than your treachery and deceit, you base ingrate! [*Sobbing.*

Sir Anth. What the devil's the matter now!—Z—ds! Mrs Malaprop, this is the oddest billing and cooing I ever heard!—but what the deuce is the meaning of it?—I'm quite astonished!

Capt. Abs. Ask the lady, sir.

Mrs M. Oh, mercy!—I'm quite analysed, for my part!—why, Lydia, what is the reason of this?

Lydia. Ask the gentleman, ma'am.

Sir Anth. Z—ds! I shall be in a phrenzy!—why, Jack, you are not come out to be any one else, are you?

Mrs M. Ay, sir, there's no more trick, is there?—you are not, like Cerberus, three gentlemen at once, are you?

Capt. Abs. You'll not let me speak—I say the lady can account for this much better than I can.

Lydia. Ma'am, you once commanded me never to think of Beverley again—there is the man—I now obey you:—for, from this moment, I renounce him for ever. [*Exit* LYDIA.

Mrs. M. O mercy and miracles! what a turn here is!—Why sure, Captain, you haven't behaved disrespectfully to my niece?

Sir Anth. Ha! ha! ha!—ha! ha! ha!—now I see it—Ha! ha! ha!—now I see it—you have been too lively, Jack.

Capt. Abs. Nay, sir, upon my word——

Sir Anth. Come, no lying, Jack—I'm sure 'twas so.

Mrs M. O lud! Sir Anthony!—O fie, Captain!

Capt. Abs. Upon my soul, ma'am—

Sir Anth. Come, no excuses, Jack;—why your father, you rogue, was so before you:—the blood of the Absolutes was always impatient.—Ha! ha! ha! poor little Lydia!—why you've frightened her, you dog, you have!

Capt. Abs. By all that's good, sir—

Sir Anth. Z—ds! say no more, I tell you—Mrs Malaprop shall make your peace.—You must make his peace, Mrs Malaprop:—you must tell her, 'tis Jack's way—tell her, 'tis all our ways—it runs in the blood of our family!—Come, away, Jack, ha! ha! ha! Mrs Malaprop—a young villain!

[*Pushes him out.*

Mrs M. Oh, Sir Anthony!—O, fie, Captain!

[*Exeunt severally.*

SCENE III.

The North Parade.

Enter SIR LUCIUS O'TRIGGER.

Sir L. I wonder where this Captain Absolute hides himself.—Upon my conscience these officers are always in one's way in love affairs:—I remember I might have married Lady Dorothy Carmine, if it had not been for a little rogue of a major, who ran away with her before she could get sight of me!—And I wonder what it is the ladies can see in them to be so fond of them—unless it be a touch of the old serpent in them, that makes the little creatures be caught, like vipers, with a bit of red cloth.—Hah,

isn't this the Captain coming?—'faith it is!—There is a probability of succeeding about that fellow, that is mighty provoking! who the devil is he talking to? [*Steps aside.*

Enter CAPTAIN ABSOLUTE.

Capt. Abs. To what fine purpose have I been plotting! a noble reward for all my schemes, upon my soul!—a little gipsey!—I did not think her so d—n'd absurd either.—'Sdeath, I never was in a worse humour in all my life!—I could cut my own throat, or any other person's, with the greatest pleasure in the world!

Sir L. O, 'faith! I'm in the luck of it.—I never could have found him in a sweeter temper for my purpose—to be sure I'm just come in the nick! now to enter into conversation with him, and so quarrel genteelly. [SIR LUCIUS *goes up to* ABSOLUTE.]—With regard to that matter, Captain, I must beg leave to differ in opinion with you.

Capt. Abs. Upon my word, then, you must be a very subtle disputant;—because, sir, I happened just then to be giving no opinion at all.

Sir L. That's no reason; for, give me leave to tell you, a man may think an untruth as well as speak one.

Capt. Abs. Very true, sir; but if a man never utters his thoughts, I should think they might stand a chance of escaping controversy.

Sir L. Then, sir, you differ in opinion with me, which amounts to the same thing.

Capt. Abs. Hark ye, Sir Lucius, what you can drive at, unless you mean to quarrel with me, I cannot conceive!

Sir L. I humbly thank you, sir, for the quickness of your apprehension; [*Bowing.*] you have named the very thing I would be at.

Capt. Abs. Very well, sir,—I shall certainly not

baulk your inclinations——but I should be glad you would please to examine your motives.

Sir L. Pray, sir, be easy—the quarrel is a very pretty quarrel, as it stands—we should only spoil it by trying to explain it.—However, your memory is very short—or you could not have forgot an affront you passed on me within this week.—So, no more, but name your time and place.

Capt. Abs. Well, sir, since you are so bent on it, the sooner the better;—let it be this evening—here by the Spring Gardens.—We shall scarcely be interrupted.

Sir L. 'Faith! that same interruption, in affairs of this nature, shows very great ill breeding.—I don't know what's the reason, but in England, if a thing of this kind gets wind, people make such a pother, that a gentleman can never fight in peace and quietness.—However, if it's the same to you, Captain, I should take it as a particular kindness, if you'd let us meet in King's Mead-Fields, as a little business will call me there about six o'clock, and I may dispatch both matters at once.

Capt. Abs. 'Tis the same to me exactly.—A little after six, then, we will discuss this matter more seriously.

Sir L. If you please, sir; there will be very pretty small-sword light, though it won't do for a long shot.—So that matter's settled! and my mind's at ease.

[*Exit.*

Enter FAULKLAND, *meeting* CAPTAIN ABSOLUTE.

Capt. Abs. Well met.—I was going to look for you.—Oh, Faulkland! all the demons of spite and disappointment have conspired against me! I'm so vexed, that if I had not the prospect of a resource, in being knocked o' the head by and by, I should scarce have spirits to tell you the cause.

Faulk. What can you mean?—Has Lydia changed her mind?—I should have thought her duty and inclination would now have pointed to the same object.

Capt. Abs. Ay, just as the eyes do of a person who squints:—when her love-eye was fixed on me—t'other, her eye of duty, was finely obliqued:—but when duty bid her point that the same way—off t'other turned on a swivel, and secured its retreat with a frown!

Faulk. But what's the resource you——

Capt. Abs. Oh, to wind up the whole, a good-natured Irishman here, has [*Mimicking* Sir Lucius.] begged leave to have the pleasure of cutting my throat—and I mean to indulge him—that's all.

Faulk. Pr'ythee, be serious.

Capt. Abs. 'Tis fact, upon my soul—Sir Lucius O'Trigger—you know him by sight—for some affront, which I am sure I never intended, has obliged me to meet him this evening at six o'clock,—'tis on that account I wished to see you—you must go with me.

Faulk. Nay, there must be some mistake, sure.—Sir Lucius shall explain himself—and I dare say matters may be accommodated:—but this evening, did you say?—I wish it had been any other time.

Capt. Abs. Why? there will be light enough:—there will (as Sir Lucius says) "be very pretty small-sword light, though it will not do for a long shot"—Confound his long shots!

Faulk. But I am myself a good deal ruffled, by a difference I have had with Julia—My vile, tormenting temper has made me treat her so cruelly, that I shall not be myself till we are reconciled.

Capt. Abs. By heavens, Faulkland, you don't deserve her!

Enter Servant, *gives* Faulkland *a Letter.*

Faulk. O, Jack! this is from Julia; I dread to open it; I fear it may be to take a last leave—perhaps to

bid me return her letters, and restore—Oh, how I suffer for my folly!

Capt. Abs. Here—let me see—[*Takes the Letter and opens it.*] Ay, a final sentence, indeed! 'tis all over with you, 'faith!

Faulk. Nay, Jack, don't keep me in suspense.

Capt. Abs. Hear, then.

As I am convinced, that my dear Faulkland's own reflections have already upbraided him for his last unkindness to me, I will not add a word on the subject. I wish to speak with you as soon as possible.

Yours ever and truly,

JULIA

There's stubbornness and resentment for you! [*Gives him the Letter.*] Why, man, you don't seem one whit the happier at this!

Faulk. Oh, yes, I am—but—but—

Capt. Abs. Confound your buts! You never hear any thing that would make another man bless himself, but you immediately damn it with a but!

Faulk. Now, Jack, as you are my friend, own honestly—don't you think there is something forward, something indelicate, in this haste to forgive? Women should never sue for reconciliation; that should always come from us: They should retain their coldness till wooed to kindness, and their pardon, like their love, should "not unsought, be won."

Capt. Abs. I have not patience to listen to you—thou'rt incorrigible! so say no more on the subject. I must go to settle a few matters—let me see you before six, remember, at my lodgings. A poor, industrious devil, like me, who have toiled, and drudged, and plotted, to gain my ends, and am, at last, disappointed by other people's folly, may, in pity, be allowed to swear and grumble a little! but a captious sceptic, in love; a slave to fretfulness and whim, who has

no difficulties but of his own creating, is a subject more fit for ridicule than compassion! [*Exit.*

Faulk. I feel his reproaches; yet I would not change this too exquisite nicety for the gross content with which he tramples on the thorns of love. His engaging me in this duel has started an idea in my head, which I will instantly pursue: I'll use it as the touchstone of Julia's sincerity and disinterestedness; if her love prove pure, and sterling ore, my name will rest on it with honour! and, once I've stamped it there, I'll lay aside my doubts for ever! [*Exit.*

ACT THE FIFTH.

SCENE I.

JULIA'S *Dressing-Room.*

JULIA.

Julia. How this message has alarmed me! what dreadful accident can he mean? why such charge to be alone? O, Faulkland! how many unhappy moments, how many tears, have you cost me!

Enter FAULKLAND.

What means this? why this caution, Faulkland?

Faulk. Alas, Julia! I am come to take a long farewell!

Julia. Heav'ns! what do you mean?

Faulk. You see before you a wretch whose life is forfeited;—Nay, start not; the infirmity of my tem-

per has drawn all this misery on me: I left you fretful and passionate,—an untoward accident drew me into a quarrel;—the event is, that I must fly this kingdom instantly!—Oh, Julia, had I been so fortunate as to have called you mine entirely, before this mischance had fallen on me, I should not so deeply dread my banishment!

Julia. My soul is oppressed with sorrow at the nature of your misfortune: had these adverse circumstances arisen from a less fatal cause, I should have felt strong comfort in the thought, that I could now chace from your bosom every doubt of the warm sincerity of my love. My heart has long known no other guardian: I now entrust my person to your honour —we will fly together: When safe from pursuit, my father's will may be fulfilled, and I receive a legal claim to be the partner of your sorrows, and tenderest comforter. Then, on the bosom of your wedded Julia, you may lull your keen regret to slumbering; while virtuous love, with a cherub's hand, shall smooth the brow of upbraiding thought, and pluck the thorn from compunction.

Faulk. O Julia! I am bankrupt in gratitude!—Would you not wish some hours to weigh the advantages you forego, and what little compensation poor Faulkland can make you, beside his solitary love?

Julia. I ask not a moment.—No, Faulkland, I have loved you for yourself: and if I now, more than ever, prize the solemn engagement which so long has pledged us to each other, it is because it leaves no room for hard aspersions on my fame, and puts the seal of duty to an act of love.—But let us not linger —perhaps this delay——

Faulk. 'Twill be better I should not venture out again till dark: yet am I grieved to think what numberless distresses will press heavy on your gentle disposition!

Julia. Perhaps your fortune may be forfeited by

this unhappy act? I know not whether 'tis so, but sure that alone can never make us unhappy.—The little I have will be sufficient to support us, and exile never should be splendid.

Faulk. Ay, but in such an abject state of life my wounded pride, perhaps, may increase the natural fretfulness of my temper, till I become a rude, morose companion, beyond your patience to endure.

Julia. If your thoughts should assume so unhappy a bent, you will the more want some mild and affectionate spirit to watch over and console you;—one who, by bearing your infirmities with gentleness and resignation, may teach you so to bear the evils of your fortune.

Faulk. Julia, I have probed you to the quick! and with this useless device, I throw away all my doubts. How shall I plead to be forgiven this last unworthy effect of my restless, unsatisfied disposition?

Julia. Has no such disaster happened as you related?

Faulk. I am ashamed to own that it was all pretended; yet, in pity, Julia, do not kill me with resenting a fault which never can be repeated: But sealing this once, my pardon, let me to-morrow, in the face of Heaven, receive my future guide and monitress, and expiate my past folly, by years of tender adoration.

Julia. Hold, Faulkland!—that you are free from a crime, which I before feared to name, Heaven knows, how sincerely I rejoice! These are tears of thankfulness for that! But, that your cruel doubts should have urged you to an imposition that has wrung my heart, gives me now a pang more keen than I can express!

Faulk. By heav'ns! Julia—

Julia. Yet hear me—My father loved you, Faulkland! and you preserved the life that tender parent gave me! in his presence I pledged my hand—joy-

fully pledged it, where before I had given my heart. When soon after I lost that parent, it seemed to me, that Providence had, in Faulkland, shown me whither to transfer, without a pause, my grateful duty, as well as my affection: Hence I have been content to bear from you, what pride and delicacy would have forbid me from another. I will not upbraid you by repeating, how you have trifled with my sincerity.

Faulk. I confess it all! yet, hear—

Julia. After such a year of trial, I might have flattered myself that I should not have been insulted with a new probation of my sincerity, as cruel, as unnecessary! I now see that it is not in your nature to be content, or confident, in love. With this conviction I never will be yours. While I had hopes, that my persevering attention, and unreproaching kindness, might in time reform your temper, I should have been happy to have gained a dearer influence over you; but I will not furnish you with a licensed power to keep alive an incorrigible fault, at the expence of one who never would contend with you.

Faulk. Nay, but, Julia, by my soul and honour!—If, after this——

Julia. But one word more.—As my faith has once been given to you, I never will barter it with another. I shall pray for your happiness with the truest sincerity; and the dearest blessing I can ask of Heaven to send you, will be, to charm you from that unhappy temper, which alone has prevented the performance of our solemn engagement. All I request of you is, that you will yourself reflect upon this infirmity; and, when you number up the many true delights it has deprived you of, let it not be your least regret, that it lost you the love of one who would have followed you in beggary through the world!

[*Exit.*

Faulk. She's gone!—for ever!—There was an awful resolution in her manner, that rivetted me to my

place. O fool!—dolt!—barbarian! Cursed as I am, with more imperfections than my fellow wretches, kind fortune sent a heaven-gifted cherub to my aid, and, like a ruffian, I have driven her from my side! —I must now haste to my appointment.—Well, my mind is tuned for such a scene!—I shall wish only to become a principal in it, and reverse the tale my cursed folly put me upon forging here. O Love!—tormentor!—fiend! whose influence, like the moon's, acting on men of dull souls, makes idiots of them, but, meeting subtler spirits, betrays their course, and urges sensibility to madness! [*Exit.*

Enter MAID *and* LYDIA.

Maid. My mistress, ma'am, I know, was here, just now—perhaps she is only in the next room. [*Exit.*

Lydia. Heigho!—Though he has used me so, this fellow runs strangely in my head. I believe one lecture from my grave cousin will make me recall him.

Enter JULIA.

Oh, Julia, I am come to you with such an appetite for consolation! Lud, child! what's the matter with you? You have been crying!—I'll be hanged if that Faulkland has not been tormenting you!

Julia. You mistake the cause of my uneasiness:—Something has flurried me a little.—Nothing that you can guess at.

Lydia. Ah! whatever vexations you may have, I can assure you mine surpass them.—You know who Beverley proves to be?

Julia. I will now own to you, Lydia, that Mr Faulkland had before informed me of the whole affair.

Lydia. So, then, I see I have been deceived by every one! but I don't care, I'll never have him.

Julia. Nay, Lydia—

Lydia. Why, is it not provoking, when I thought

we were coming to the prettiest distress imaginable, to find myself made a mere Smithfield bargain of at last?—There had I projected one of the most sentimental elopements!—so becoming a disguise!—so amiable a ladder of ropes!—Conscious moon—four horses—Scotch parson—with such surprise to Mrs Malaprop! and such paragraphs in the newspapers!—Oh, I shall die with disappointment!

Julia. I don't wonder at it.

Lydia. Now—sad reverse!—what have I to expect, but, after a deal of flimsy preparation, with a bishop's licence, and my aunt's blessing, to go simpering up to the altar; or, perhaps, be cried three times in a country church, and have an unmannerly fat clerk ask the consent of every butcher in the parish, to join John Absolute, and Lydia Languish, spinster!—Oh, that I should live to hear myself called spinster!

Julia. Melancholy, indeed!

Lydia. How mortifying, to remember the dear delicious shifts I used to be put to, to gain half a minute's conversation with this fellow!—How often have I stole forth, in the coldest night in January, and found him in the garden stuck like a dripping statue!—There would he kneel to me in the snow, and sneeze and cough, so pathetically! he shivering with cold, and I with apprehension!—and, while the freezing blast numbed our joints, how warmly would he press me to pity his flame, and glow with mutual ardour!—Ah, Julia, that was something like being in love!

Julia. If I were in spirits, Lydia, I should chide you only by laughing heartily at you; but it suits more the situation of my mind at present earnestly to entreat you, not to let a man, who loves you with sincerity, suffer that unhappiness from your caprice, which I know too well caprice can inflict.

Lydia. Oh, Lud! what has brought my aunt here?

Enter MRS MALAPROP *and* DAVID.

Mrs M. So! so! here's fine work!—here's fine suicide, parricide, and simulation, going on in the fields! and Sir Anthony not to be found, to prevent the antistrophe!

Julia. For heaven's sake, madam, what's the meaning of this?

Lydia. Oh, patience!—Do, ma'am, for heaven's sake! tell us what is the matter?

Mrs M. Why, murder's the matter! slaughter's the matter! killing's the matter!—But he can tell you the perpendiculars.

Julia. Do speak, friend. [*To* DAVID.

David. Look ye, my lady——by the mass, there's mischief going on. Folks don't use to meet for amusement with fire-arms, firelocks, fire-engines, fire-screens, fire-office, and the devil knows what other crackers beside!—This, my lady, I say has an angry favour.—To be sure, Captain Absolute—

Julia. But who is there beside Captain Absolute, friend?

David. My poor master—under favour for mentioning him first. You know me, my lady,—I am David—and my master of course is, or was, Squire Acres.—Then comes Squire Faulkland.

Julia. Do, ma'am, let us instantly endeavour to prevent mischief.

Mrs M. Oh, fie! it would be very inelegant in us:—we should only participate things.

David. Ah, do, Mrs Aunt, save a few lives!—they are desperately given, believe me.—Above all, there is that bloodthirsty Philistine, Sir Lucius O'Trigger.

Mrs M. Sir, Lucius O'Trigger!—O mercy! have they drawn poor little dear Sir Lucius into the scrape!—Why, how you stand, girl! you have no more feeling than one of the Derbyshire putrefactions!

Lydia. What are we to do, madam?

Mrs M. Why, fly with the utmost felicity, to be sure, to prevent mischief!—here, friend—you can show us the place?

David. Oh, never fear; we shall find it out by the report of the pistols. [*Exeunt, he talking.*

SCENE II.

King's Mead-Fields.

SIR LUCIUS *and* ACRES, *with Pistols.*

Acres. By my valour, then, Sir Lucius, forty yards is a good distance—Odds levels and aims!—I say, it is a good distance.

Sir L. It is for muskets, or small field-pieces;—upon my conscience, Mr Acres, you must leave these things to me.—Stay, now—I'll show you. [*Measures Paces along the Stage.*] There, now, that is a very pretty distance—a pretty gentleman's distance.

Acres. Z—ds! we might as well fight in a sentry-box! I tell you, Sir Lucius, the farther he is off the cooler I shall take my aim.

Sir L. 'Faith, then, I suppose you would aim at him best of all if he was out of sight!

Acres. No, Sir Lucius—but I should think forty, or eight and thirty yards——

Sir L. Pho! pho! nonsense! three or four feet between the mouths of your pistols is as good as a mile.

Acres. Odds bullets, no!—by my valour, there is no merit in killing him so near! Do, my dear Sir Lucius, let me bring him down at a long shot:—a long shot, Sir Lucius, if you love me!

Sir L. Well—the gentleman's friend and I must settle that.—But tell me now, Mr Acres, in case of

an accident, is there any little will or commission I could execute for you?

Acres. I am much obliged to you, Sir Lucius—but I don't understand——

Sir L. Why, you may think there's no being shot at without a little risk—and, if an unlucky bullet should carry a quietus with it—I say, it will be no time then to be bothering you about family matters.

Acres. A quietus!

Sir L. For instance, now—if that should be the case—would you chuse to be pickled, and sent home?—or would it be the same to you to lie here in the Abbey?—I'm told there is very snug lying in the Abbey.

Acres. Pickled!—Snug lying in the Abbey!—Odds tremors! Sir Lucius, don't talk so!

Sir L. I suppose, Mr Acres, you never were engaged in an affair of this kind before?

Acres. No, Sir Lucius, never before.

Sir L. Ah, that's a pity!—there's nothing like being used to a thing.—Pray, now, how would you receive the gentleman's shot?

Acres. Odds files! I've practised that—there, Sir Lucius, there—[*Puts himself in an Attitude.*]—a side-front, hey?—Odd, I'll make myself small enough—I'll stand edgeways.

Sir L. Now, you're quite out—for if you stand so when I take my aim— [*Levelling at him.*

Acres. Z—ds, Sir Lucius! are you sure it is not cocked?

Sir L. Never fear.

Acres. But—but—you don't know—it may go off of its own head!

Sir L. Pho! be easy.—Well, now, if I hit you in the body, my bullet has a double chance—for if it misses a vital part of your right side, 'twill be very hard if it don't succeed on the left!

Acres. A vital part!

Sir L. But, there—fix yourself so—[*Placing him.*] let me see the broadside of your full front—there—now a ball or two may pass clean through your body, and never do you any harm at all.

Acres. Clean through me!—a ball or two clean through me!

Sir L. Ay, may they—and it is much the genteelest attitude into the bargain.

Acres. Look ye! Sir Lucius—I'd just as lieve be shot in an awkward posture as a genteel one—so, by, my valour! I will stand edgeways.

Sir L. [*Looking at his Watch.*] Sure they don't mean to disappoint us—hah! no, faith—I think I see them coming.

Acres. Hey!—what!—coming!——

Sir L. Ay, who are those yonder, getting over the stile?

Acres. There are two of them, indeed! well—let them come—hey, Sir Lucius!—we—we—we—we—won't run.

Sir L. Run!

Acres. No, I say—we won't run, by my valour!

Sir L. What the devil's the matter with you?

Acres. Nothing, nothing, my dear friend—my dear Sir Lucius—but I—I—I don't feel quite so bold somehow as I did.

Sir L. O fie! consider your honour.

Acres. Ay, true—my honour—do, Sir Lucius, edge in a word or two every now and then about my honour.

Sir L. Well, here they're coming. [*Looking.*

Acres. Sir Lucius, if I wasn't with you I should almost think I was afraid—if my valour should leave me! valour will come and go.

Sir L. Then pray keep it fast while you have it.

Acres. Sir Lucius—I doubt it is going—yes, my valour is certainly going! it is sneaking off!—I feel it oozing out as it were, at the palms of my hands!

Sir L. Your honour—your honour. Here they are.

Acres. Oh, mercy!—now that I was safe at Clod Hall! or could be shot before I was aware!

Enter FAULKLAND *and* CAPTAIN ABSOLUTE.

Sir L. Gentlemen, your most obedient—hah!—what, Captain Absolute!—So, I suppose, sir, you are come here, just like myself—to do a kind office, first for your friend—then to proceed to business on your own account.

Acres. What, Jack!—my dear Jack!—my dear friend!

Capt. Abs. Hark ye, Bob, Beverley's at hand.

Sir L. Well, Mr Acres—I don't blame your saluting the gentleman civilly. So, Mr Beverley, [*To* FAULKLAND.] if you chuse your weapons, the captain and I will measure the ground.

Faulk. My weapons, sir!

Acres. Odds life! Sir Lucius, I'm not going to fight Mr Faulkland; these are my particular friends!

Sir L. What, sir, did not you come here to fight Mr Acres?

Faulk. Not I, upon my word, sir.

Sir L. Well, now, that's mighty provoking! But I hope, Mr Faulkland, as there are three of us come on purpose for the game, you won't be so cantankerous as to spoil the party, by sitting out.

Capt. Abs. Oh pray, Faulkland, fight, to oblige Sir Lucius.

Faulk. Nay, if Mr Acres is so bent on the matter.

Acres. No, no, Mr Faulkland—I'll bear my disappointment like a Christian—Look ye, Sir Lucius, there's no occasion at all for me to fight; and if it is the same to you, I'd as lieve let it alone.

Sir L. Observe me, Mr Acres—I must not be trifled with. You have certainly challenged somebody, and you came here to fight him. Now, if that gentle-

man is willing to represent him—I can't see, for my soul, why it isn't just the same thing.

Acres. Why, no, Sir Lucius, I tell you, 'tis one Beverley I've challenged—a fellow, you see, that dare not show his face. If he were here, I'd make him give up his pretensions directly!

Capt. Abs. Hold, Bob—let me set you right—there is no such man as Beverley in the case. The person who assumed that name is before you; and as his pretensions are the same in both characters, he is ready to support them in whatever way you please.

Sir L. Well, this is lucky. Now you have an opportunity——

Acres. What, quarrel with my dear friend, Jack Absolute!—not if he were fifty Beverleys! Z—ds! Sir Lucius, you would not have me be so unnatural!

Sir L. Upon my conscience, Mr Acres, your valour has oozed away with a vengeance!

Acres. Not in the least! odds backs and abettors! I'll be your second with all my heart—and if you should get a quietus, you may command me entirely. I'll get you a snug lying in the Abbey here; or pickle you, and send you over to Blunderbuss-hall, or any thing of the kind, with the greatest pleasure.

Sir L. Pho! pho! you are little better than a coward.

Acres. Mind, gentlemen, he calls me a coward; coward was the word, by my valour!

Sir L. Well, sir?

Acres. Look ye, Sir Lucius, 'tisn't that I mind the word coward—Coward may be said in joke—But if you had called me a poltroon, odds daggers and balls——

Sir L. Well, sir?

Acres. —I should have thought you a very ill-bred man.

Sir L. Pho! you are beneath my notice.

Capt. Abs. Nay, Sir Lucius, you can't have a better

second than my friend Acres. He is a most determined dog—called in the country, fighting Bob.—He generally kills a man a week;—don't you, Bob?

Acres. Ay—at home!—

Sir L. Well, then, captain, 'tis we must begin—so come out, my little counsellor, [*Draws his Sword.*]—and ask the gentleman, whether he will resign the lady without forcing you to proceed against him?

Capt. Abs. Come then, sir, [*Draws.*] since you won't let it be an amicable suit, here's my reply.

Enter Sir Anthony, David, *and the* Women.

David. Knock 'em all down, sweet Sir Anthony; knock down my master in particular—and bind his hands over to their good behaviour!

Sir Anth. Put up, Jack, put up, or I shall be in a phrenzy—how came you in a duel, sir?

Capt. Abs. 'Faith, sir, that gentleman can tell you better than I; 'twas he called on me, and you know, sir, I serve his majesty.

Sir Anth. Here's a pretty fellow! I catch him going to cut a man's throat, and he tells me he serves his majesty!—Z—ds! sirrah, then how durst you draw the king's sword against one of his subjects?

Capt. Abs. Sir, I tell you, that gentleman called me out, without explaining his reasons.

Sir Anth. Gad, sir! how came you to call my son out, without explaining your reasons?

Sir L. Your son, sir, insulted me in a manner which my honour could not brook.

Sir Anth. Z—ds, Jack! how durst you insult the gentleman in a manner which his honour could not brook?

Mrs M. Come, come, let's have no honour before ladies—Captain Absolute, come here—How could you intimidate us so?—Here's Lydia has been terrified to death for you.

Capt. Abs. For fear I should be killed, or escape, ma'am?

Mrs M. Nay, no delusions to the past—Lydia is convinced; speak, child.

Sir L. With your leave, ma'am, I must put in a word here—I believe I could interpret the young lady's silence—Now mark—

Lydia. What is it you mean, sir?

Sir L. Come, come, Delia, we must be serious now—this is no time for trifling.

Lydia. 'Tis true, sir; and your reproof bids me offer this gentleman my hand, and solicit the return of his affections.

Capt. Abs. Oh, my little angel, say you so?—Sir Lucius, I perceive there must be some mistake here—with regard to the affront which you affirm I have given you, I can only say that it could not have been intentional. And as you must be convinced, that I should not fear to support a real injury—you shall now see that I am not ashamed to atone for an inadvertency—I ask your pardon.—But for this lady, while honoured with her approbation, I will support my claim against any man whatever.

Sir Anth. Well said, Jack, and I'll stand by you, my boy.

Acres. Mind, I give up all my claim—I make no pretensions to any thing in the world—and if I can't get a wife without fighting for her, by my valour, I'll live a bachelor.

Sir L. Captain, give me your hand—an affront handsomely acknowledged becomes an obligation—and as for the lady—if she chuses to deny her own hand-writing here— [*Takes out Letters.*

Mrs M. Oh, he will dissolve my mystery!—Sir Lucius, perhaps, there is some mistake—perhaps I can illuminate——

Sir L. Pray, old gentlewoman, don't interfere

where you have no business.—Miss Languish, are you my Delia, or not?

Lydia. Indeed, Sir Lucius, I am not.

[LYDIA *and* ABSOLUTE *walk aside.*

Mrs M. Sir Lucius O'Trigger—ungrateful as you are—I own the soft impeachment—pardon my blushes, I am Delia.

Sir L. You Delia—pho! pho! be easy.

Mrs M. Why, thou barbarous Vandyke—those letters are mine—When you are more sensible of my benignity, perhaps I may be brought to encourage your addresses.

Sir L. Mrs Malaprop, I am extremely sensible of your condescension; and whether you or Lucy have put this trick upon me, I am equally beholden to you.—And, to show you I am not ungrateful, Captain Absolute, since you have taken that lady from me, I'll give you my Delia into the bargain.

Capt. Abs. I am much obliged to you, Sir Lucius; but here's my friend, fighting Bob, unprovided for.

Sir L. Hah! little valour—here, will you make your fortune?

Acres. Odds wrinkles! No.—But give me your hand, Sir Lucius, forget and forgive; but if ever I give you a chance of pickling me again, say Bob Acres is a dunce, that's all.

Sir Anth. Come, Mrs Malaprop, don't be cast down—you are in your bloom yet.

Mrs M. O, Sir Anthony!—men are all barbarians—

[*All retire but* JULIA *and* FAULKLAND.

Julia. He seems dejected and unhappy—not sullen—there was some foundation, however, for the tale he told me—O woman! how true should be your judgment, when your resolution is so weak!

Faulk. Julia!—how can I sue for what I so little deserve? I dare not presume—yet hope is the child of penitence.

Julia. Oh! Faulkland, you have not been more

faulty in your unkind treatment of me, than I am now in wanting inclination to resent it. As my heart honestly bids me place my weakness to the account of love, I should be ungenerous not to admit the same plea for yours.

Faulk. Now I shall be blest indeed!

[SIR ANTHONY *comes forward.*

Sir Anth. What's going on here?—So you have been quarrelling too, I warrant.——Come, Julia, I never interfered before; but let me have a hand in the matter at last.—All the faults I have ever seen in my friend Faulkland, seemed to proceed from what he calls the delicacy and warmth of his affection for you—There, marry him directly, Julia, you'll find he'll mend surprisingly! [*The rest come forward.*

Sir L. Come, now, I hope there is no dissatisfied person but what is content; for as I have been disappointed myself, it will be very hard if I have not the satisfaction of seeing other people succeed better—

Acres. You are right, Sir Lucius.—So, Jack, I wish you joy—Mr Faulkland, the same.—Ladies,—come now, to show you I'm neither vexed nor angry, odds tabors and pipes! I'll order the fiddles in half an hour, to the New Rooms—and I insist on your all meeting me there.

Sir Anth. Gad! sir, I like your spirit; and at single lads will drink a health to the young and a husband to Mrs Malaprop.

Our partners are stolen from us, Jack—I congratulated by each other—yours for ked in time the errors of an ill-directed on, which might have betrayed an innocent mine for having, by her gentleness and reformed the unhappy temper of one, who e wretched whom he loved most, and tor- heart he ought to have adored.

Capt. Abs. Well, Jack, we have both tasted the bit-

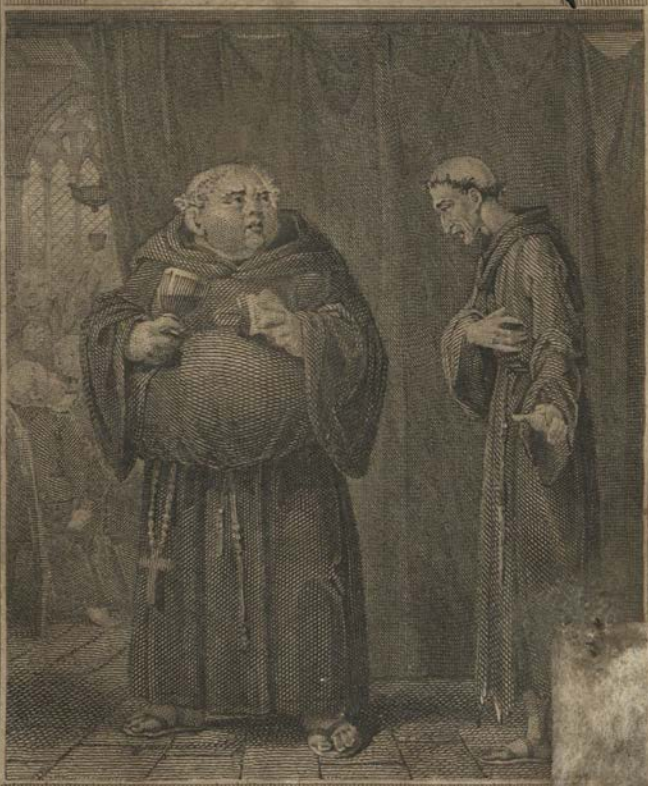
ters, as well as the sweets, of love—with this difference only, that you always prepared the bitter cup for yourself, while I——

Lydia. Was always obliged to me for it, hey! Mr Modesty!—But come, no more of that—our happiness is now as unalloyed as general.

Julia. Then let us study to preserve it so: and while Hope pictures to us a flattering scene of happiness, let us deny its pencil those colours which are too bright to be lasting.—When hearts diffusing happiness would unite their fortunes, Virtue would crown them with an unfading garland of modest, hurtless flowers; but ill-judging Passion will force the gaudier rose into the wreath, whose thorn offends most when its leaves are dropt!

THE END.

DUENNA.



PAUL.—'TIS FALSE YOU HAVE MORE
ACT III. APPETITES THAN HAIRS. SCENE V.

Drawn by H. Corbould. Published by Longman & Co 1816. Engr.

THE DUENNA;

A COMIC OPERA,

IN THREE ACTS;

By RICHARD BRINSLEY SHERIDAN, Esq.

AS PERFORMED AT THE THEATRES ROYAL,

DRURY LANE AND COVENT GARDEN.

PRINTED UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF THE MANAGERS

FROM THE PROMPT-BOOK.

WITH REMARKS

BY MRS INCHBALD.

LONDON:

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Printed by James Ballantyne & Co.

REMARKS.

This drama has a charm for the public beyond its own intrinsic worth—it was written by Richard Brinsley Sheridan. If that name has no power over the reader's imagination, so as to give to every sentence a degree of interest, let him throw aside the book, and forbear to seek after literary pleasures, for he has not the taste to enjoy them.

Although "The Duenna's" highest claim to notice depends, now, upon the reputation of its author, yet the author was first indebted to "The Duenna" for the honour of ranking among poets, and of receiving from the fashionable world all those animating caresses, so dear to a poet's heart.

This opera was brought upon the stage in 1775, and during that, and many following years, delighted the dramatic world; still the author did not receive undivided praise for its success:—Musicians had their share, and certain singers of the most forcible attraction.

Divested of all adventitious aid, the value of the opera consists in the beautiful poetry of many of the songs; for though it is a production of much ingenuity and skill, it does not give a presage, either in wit,

or incident, of such a work, from the same hand, as "The School for Scandal." The comparing of Isaac's neuter faith to the blank leaf between two scripture doctrines, is, indeed, the happy conception of a very extraordinary imagination; but as this brilliant sentence stands in the dialogue unrivalled, without companion, or comparison with any other in the play, it has more the appearance of some other writer's wit, than that of the ostensible author; though subsequent wit from the same pen allows him most probable claims to it.

Of less doubtful origin is the best incident in the opera, or rather, the foundation and fable of the opera itself, which is borrowed from Wycherley's "Country Wife."—Not purloined, and the mark taken out, to prevent detection; but fairly borrowed, and used almost to the very letter.

Neither is the scene of Friar Paul and his brethren of Mr Sheridan's invention; but is either taken from Marmontel, or some other French author.

Margaret, the Duenna, has some resemblance to Bickerstaff's Ursula; but little Isaac, the Jew, seems to be a character wholly original: and notwithstanding there is great humour in him, there is, at the same time, infinite instruction. He is an excellent example for men, vain either of their persons, or their intellects. He has all the folly of both elderly and youthful coxcombs; and is happily punished by a destiny, which, in general, falls to their share.

It is painful to record errors; but as the author was a young man, and somewhat inexperienced, at

the time of writing this drama, these circumstances may be his excuse for having here slandered a noble science, which he has since pursued with unremitting industry; and which, no doubt, has long given him reason to recant that unguarded declaration, in page 44, which alleges that "conscience has nothing to do with politics."

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

	DRURY-LANE.	COVENT-GARDEN.
DON JEROME	*Mr Matthews.*	*Mr Munden.*
FERDINAND	*Mr Kelly.*	*Mr Johnstone.*
ANTONIO	*Mr Dignum.*	*Mr Hill.*
CARLOS	*Mr Braham.*	*Mr Incledon.*
ISAAC MENDOZA	*Mr Dowton.*	*Mr Fawcett.*
LOPEZ	*Mr Wewitzer.*	*Mr Farley.*
LORENZO	*Mr Fisher.*	*Mr Wilkinson.*
LEWIS	*Mr Chatterly.*	*Mr Curties.*
SANCHO	*Mr Webb.*	*Mr Wilde.*
FATHER PAUL	*Mr Palmer.*	*Mr Darley.*
FRANCIS	*Mr Maddocks.*	*Mr Abbot.*
AUGUSTINE	*Mr Cooke.*	*Mr Street.*
PORTER	*Mr Evans.*	*Mr Simmons.*
CLARA	*Signora Storace.*	*Mrs Atkins.*
LOUISA	*Miss De Camp.*	*Mrs Martyr.*
DUENNA	*Miss Pope.*	*Mrs Davenport.*
LOUISA'S MAID	*Mrs Coates.*	*Mrs Blurton.*
CLARA'S MAID	*Miss Tidswell.*	*Mrs Findlay.*

THE DUENNA.

ACT THE FIRST.

SCENE I.

A Street.

Enter LOPEZ, *with a dark Lanthorn.*

Lopez. Past three o'clock! soh! a notable hour for one of my regular disposition, to be strolling like a bravo through the streets of Seville! Well, of all services, to serve a young lover is the hardest—not that I am an enemy to love; but my love, and my master's, differ strangely—Don Ferdinand is much too gallant to eat, drink, or sleep—now, my love gives me an appetite—then I am fond of dreaming of my mistress, and I love dearly to toast her—This cannot be done without good sleep and good liquor; hence my partiality to a feather-bed and a bottle—what a pity now, that I have not further time for reflections! but my master expects thee, honest Lopez, to secure his retreat from Donna Clara's window, as I guess—[*Music without.*] hey! sure, I heard music! so, so! who have we here? Oh, Don Antonio, my master's friend, come from the masquerade, to serenade my

young mistress, Donna Louisa, I suppose: soh! we shall have the old gentleman up presently—lest he should miss his son, I had best lose no time in getting to my post. [*Exit.*

Enter ANTONIO, *with* MASKS *and Music.*

SONG.—ANTONIO.

Tell me, my lute, can thy soft strain
So gently speak thy master's pain?
So softly sing, so humbly sigh,
That, though my sleeping love shall know
Who sings—who sighs below,
Her rosy slumbers shall not fly?
Thus, may some vision whisper more
Than ever I dare speak before.

1 *Mask.* Antonio, your mistress will never wake, while you sing so dolefully; love, like a cradled infant, is lulled by a sad melody.

Ant. I do not wish to disturb her rest.

1 *Mask.* The reason is, because you know she does not regard you enough to appear, if you awaked her.

Ant. Nay, then, I'll convince you. [*Sings.*

The breath of morn bids hence the night,
Unveil those beauteous eyes, my fair;
For till the dawn of love is there,
I feel no day, I own no light.

LOUISA—*replies from a Window.*

Waking, I heard thy numbers chide,
Waking, the dawn did bless my sight,
'Tis Phœbus sure, that woos,' I cried,
Who speaks in song, who moves in light.

DON JEROME—*From a Window.*

What vagabonds are these, I hear,
Fiddling, fluting, rhyming ranting,
Piping, scraping, whining, canting,
Fly, scurvy minstrels, fly!

TRIO.

Louisa. *Nay, pr'ythee, father, why so rough?*
Ant. *An humble lover I.*
Jerome. *How durst you, daughter, lend an ear*
To such deceitful stuff?
Quick, from the window, fly!
Louisa. *Adieu, Antonio!*
Ant. *Must you go?*
Louisa. } *We soon, perhaps, may meet again;*
Ant. } *For though hard fortune is our foe,*
The god of love will fight for us.
Jerome. *Reach me the blunderbuss.*
Ant. & L. *The god of love, who knows our pain,*
Jerome. *Hence, or these slugs are through your brain.*
[Exeunt severally.

SCENE II.

A Piazza.

Enter FERDINAND *and* LOPEZ.

Lopez. Truly, sir, I think that a little sleep, once in a week or so——

Ferd. Peace, fool, don't mention sleep to me.

Lopez. No, no, sir, I don't mention your low-bred, vulgar, sound sleep; but I can't help thinking that a

gentle slumber, or half an hour's dozing, if it were only for the novelty of the thing—

Ferd. Peace, booby, I say!—Oh Clara, dear, cruel disturber of my rest!

Lopez. And of mine too.

Ferd. 'Sdeath! to trifle with me at such a juncture as this—now to stand on punctilios——love me! I don't believe she ever did.

Lopez. Nor I either.

Ferd. Or is it, that her sex never know their desires for an hour together?

Lopez. Ah, they know them oftner than they'll own them.

Ferd. Is there, in the world, so inconstant a creature as Clara?

Lopez. I could name one.

Ferd. Yes; the tame fool, who submits to her caprice.

Lopez. I thought he couldn't miss it.

Ferd. Is she not capricious, teazing, tyrannical, obstinate, perversé, absurd? ay, a wilderness of faults and follies; her looks are scorn, and her very smiles —'sdeath! I wish I hadn't mentioned her smiles; for she does smile such beaming loveliness, such fascinating brightness—Oh, death and madness! I shall die if I lose her.

Lopez. Oh, those damned smiles have undone all!

AIR.—FERDINAND.

Could I her faults remember,
Forgetting every charm,
Soon would impartial Reason
The tyrant Love disarm.
But when enraged I number
Each failing of her mind,
Love still suggests each beauty,
And sees—while Reason's blind.

Lopez. Here comes Don Antonio, sir.

Ferd. Well, go you home—I shall be there presently.

Lopez. Ah, those cursed smiles! [*Exit.*

Enter ANTONIO.

Ferd. Antonio, Lopez tells me he left you chaunting before our door—was my father waked?

Ant. Yes, yes; he has a singular affection for music, so I left him roaring at his barred window, like the print of Bajazet in the cage. And what brings you out so early?

Ferd. I believe I told you, that to-morrow was the day fixed by Don Pedro and Clara's unnatural stepmother, for her to enter a convent, in order that her brat might possess her fortune; made desperate by this, I procured a key to the door, and bribed Clara's maid to leave it unbolted; at two this morning, I entered, unperceived, and stole to her chamber—I found her waking and weeping.

Ant. Happy Ferdinand!

Ferd. 'Sdeath! hear the conclusion—I was rated as the most confident ruffian, for daring to approach her room at that hour of night.

Ant. Ay, ay, this was at first?

Ferd. No such thing; she would not hear a word from me, but threatened to raise her mother, if I did not instantly leave her.

Ant. Well, but at last?—

Ferd. At last! why, I was forced to leave the house, as I came in.

Ant. And did you do nothing to offend her?

Ferd. Nothing, as I hope to be saved—I believe, I might snatch a dozen or two of kisses.

Ant. Was that all? well, I think, I never heard of such assurance!

Ferd. Zounds! I tell you, I behaved with the utmost respect.

Ant. O Lord! I don't mean you, but in her—but, hark ye, Ferdinand, did you leave your key with them?

Ferd. Yes; the maid, who saw me out, took it from the door.

Ant. Then, my life for it, her mistress elopes after you.

Ferd. Ay, to bless my rival, perhaps—I am in a humour to suspect every body—you loved her once, and thought her an angel, as I do now.

Ant. Yes, I loved her, till I found she wouldn't love me, and then I discovered that she hadn't a good feature in her face.

AIR.

I ne'er could any lustre see
In eyes that would not look on me;
I ne'er saw nectar on a lip,
But where my own did hope to sip.
Has the maid, who seeks my heart
Cheeks of rose, untouch'd by art?
I will own the colour true,
When yielding blushes aid their hue.

Is her hand so soft and pure?
I must press it, to be sure;
Nor can I be certain then,
Till it, grateful, press again;
Must I, with attentive eye,
Watch her heaving bosom sigh?
I will do so, when I see
That heaving bosom sigh for me.

Besides, Ferdinand, you have full security in my love for your sister; help me there, and I can never disturb you with Clara.

Ferd. As far as I can, consistently with the honour

of our family, you know I will; but there must be no eloping.

Ant. And yet, now, you would carry off Clara?

Ferd. Ay, that's a different case—we never mean that others should act to our sisters and wives, as we do to others'—But, to-morrow, Clara is to be forced into a convent.

Ant. Well, and am not I so unfortunately circumstanced? To-morrow, your father forces Louisa to marry Isaac, the Portuguese—but come with me, and we'll devise something, I warrant.

Ferd. I must go home.

Ant. Well, adieu!

Ferd. But, Antonio, if you did not love my sister, you have too much honour and friendship to supplant me with Clara.

AIR.—ANTONIO.

Friendship is the bond of reason;
But if beauty disapprove,
Heaven dissolves all other treason,
In the heart that's true to love.
The faith which to my friend I swore,
As a civil oath I view;
But, to the charms which I adore,
'Tis religion to be true. [Exit.

Ferd. There is always a levity in Antonio's manner of replying to me on this subject that is very alarming—'Sdeath! if Clara should love him after all! [*Exit.*

SCENE III.

A Room in DON JEROME'S *House.*

Enter LOUISA *and* DUENNA.

Louisa. But, my dear Margaret, my charming Duenna, do you think we shall succeed?

Duenna. I tell you again, I have no doubt on't; but it must be instantly put to the trial—Every thing is prepared in your room, and for the rest, we must trust to fortune.

Louisa. My father's oath was, never to see me till I had consented to——

Duenna. 'Twas thus I overheard him say to his friend, Don Guzman, "I will demand of her to-morrow, once for all, whether she will consent to marry Isaac Mendoza; if she hesitates, I will make a solemn oath never to see or speak to her, till she returns to her duty."—These were his words.

Louisa. And on his known obstinate adherence to what he has once said, you have formed this plan for my escape—But have you secured my maid in our interest?

Duenna. She is a party in the whole; but remember, if we succeed, you resign all right and title in little Isaac, the Jew, over to me.

Louisa. That I do with all my soul; get him, if you can, and I shall wish you joy, most heartily. He is twenty times as rich as my poor Antonio.

AIR.

Thou canst not boast of fortune's store,
My love, while me they wealthy call,
But I was glad to find thee poor,
For, with my heart, I'd give thee all.
And then the grateful youth shall own,
I loved him for himself alone.

But when his worth my hand shall gain,
No word or look of mine shall show
That I the smallest thought retain
Of what my bounty did bestow.
Yet still his grateful heart shall own,
I loved him for himself alone.

Duenna. I hear Don Jerome coming—Quick, give me the last letter I brought you from Antonio—you know that is to be the ground of my dismission—I must slip out to seal it up, as undelivered. [*Exit.*

Enter DON JEROME *and* FERDINAND.

Jerome. What, I suppose, you have been serenading too! Eh, disturbing some peaceable neighbourhood with villainous catgut, and lascivious piping! Out on't! you set your sister, here, a vile example; but I come to tell you, madam, that I'll suffer no more of these midnight incantations—these amorous orgies, that steal the senses in the hearing; as, they say, Egyptian embalmers serve mummies, extracting the brain through the ears; however, there's an end of your frolics—Isaac Mendoza will be here presently, and to-morrow you shall marry him.

Louisa. Never, while I have life.

Ferd. Indeed, sir, I wonder how you can think of such a man for a son-in-law.

Jerome. Sir, you are very kind, to favour me with

your sentiments—and pray, what is your objection to him?

Ferd. He is a Portuguese in the first place.

Jerome. No such thing, boy, he has forsworn his country.

Louisa. He is a Jew.

Jerome. Another mistake: he has been a Christian these six weeks.

Ferd. Ay, he left his old religion for an estate, and has not had time to get a new one.

Louisa. But stands like a dead wall between church and synagogue, or like the blank leaves between the Old and New Testament.

Jerome. Any thing more?

Ferd. But the most remarkable part of his character is his passion for deceit and tricks of cunning.

Louisa. Though at the same time, the fool predominates so much over the knave, that I am told he is generally the dupe of his own art.

Ferd. True, like an unskilful gunner, he usually misses his aim, and is hurt by the recoil of his own piece.

Jerome. Any thing more?

Louisa. To sum up all, he has the worst fault a husband can have—he's not my choice.

Jerome. But you are his; and choice on one side is sufficient—two lovers should never meet in marriage—be you sour as you please, he is sweet-tempered, and for your good fruit, there's nothing like ingrafting on a crab.

Louisa. I detest him as a lover, and shall ten times more as a husband.

Jerome. I don't know that—marriage generally makes a great change—but, to cut the matter short, will you have him or not?

Louisa. There is nothing else I could disobey you in.

Jerome. Do you value your father's peace?

Louisa. So much, that I will not fasten on him the regret of making an only daughter wretched.

Jerome. Very well, ma'am, then mark me—never more will I see or converse with you till you return to your duty—no reply—this and your chamber shall be your apartments; I never will stir out, without leaving you under lock and key, and when I'm at home no creature can approach you but through my library—we'll try who can be most obstinate—out of my sight—there remain till you know your duty.

[*Pushes her out.*

Ferd. Surely, sir, my sister's inclinations should be consulted in a matter of this kind, and some regard paid to Don Antonio, being my particular friend.

Jerome. That, doubtless, is a very great recommendation—I certainly have not paid sufficient respect to it.

Ferd. There is not a man living I would sooner chuse for a brother-in-law.

Jerome. Very possible; and if you happen to have e'er a sister, who is not at the same time a daughter of mine, I'm sure I shall have no objection to the relationship—but at present, if you please, we'll drop the subject.

Ferd. Nay, sir, 'tis only my regard for my sister makes me speak.

Jerome. Then pray, sir, in future, let your regard for your father make you hold your tongue.

Ferd. I have done, sir—I shall only add a wish that you would reflect what at our age you would have felt, had you been crossed in your affection for the mother of her you are so severe to.

Jerome. Why, I must confess I had a great affection for your mother's ducats, but that was all, boy—I married her for her fortune, and she took me in obedience to her father, and a very happy couple we were—we never expected any love from one another, and so we were never disappointed—if we grumbled a

little now and then, it was soon over, for we were never fond enough to quarrel, and when the good woman died, why, why—I had as lieve she had lived, and I wish every widower in Seville could say the same—I shall now go and get the key of this dressing room—so, good son, if you have any lecture in support of disobedience to give your sister, it must be brief; so make the best of your time, d'ye hear?

[*Exit.*

Ferd. I fear, indeed, my friend Antonio has little to hope for—however Louisa has firmness, and my father's anger will probably only increase her affection.—In our intercourse with the world, it is natural for us to dislike those who are innocently the cause of our distress; but in the heart's attachment, a woman never likes a man with ardour till she has suffered for his sake; [*Noise.*] soh! what bustle is here! between my father and the Duenna too—I'll e'en get out of the way. [*Exit.*

Enter DON JEROME *with a Letter, pulling in the* DUENNA.

Jerome. I'm astonish'd! I'm thunder-struck! here's treachery and conspiracy with a vengeance! you, Antonio's creature, and chief manager of this plot for my daughter's eloping! you, that I placed here as a scarecrow?

Duenna. What?

Jerome. A scarecrow—to prove a decoy-duck—what have you to say for yourself?

Duenna. Well, sir, since you have forced that letter from me, and discovered my real sentiments, I scorn to renounce them.—I am Antonio's friend, and it was my intention that your daughter should have served you as all such old tyrannical sots should be served—I delight in the tender passions, and would befriend all under their influence.

Jerome. The tender passions! yes, they would be-

come those impenetrable features!—why, thou deceitful hag! I placed thee as a guard to the rich blossoms of my daughter's beauty—I thought that dragon's front of thine would cry aloof to the sons of gallantry—steel traps and spring guns seemed writ in every wrinkle of it—but you shall quit my house this instant—the tender passions, indeed! go, thou wanton sybil, thou amorous woman of Endor, go!

Duenna. You base, scurrilous, old—but I won't demean myself by naming what you are—yes, savage, I'll leave your den; but I suppose you don't mean to detain my apparel—I may have my things, I presume?

Jerome. I took you, mistress, with your wardrobe on—what have you pilfered, heh?

Duenna. Sir, I must take leave of my mistress, she has valuables of mine; besides, my cardinal and veil are in her room.

Jerome. Your veil forsooth! what, do you dread being gazed at? or are you afraid of your complexion? well, go take your leave, and get your veil and cardinal! soh! you quit the house within these five minutes—In—in—quick [*Exit* DUENNA.] Here was a precious plot of mischief!—these are the comforts daughters bring us!

AIR.

If a daughter you have, she's the plague of your life,
No peace shall you know, tho' you've buried your wife,
At twenty she mocks at the duty you taught her.
Oh, what a plague is an obstinate daughter.
Sighing and whining,
Dying and pining,
Oh, what a plague is an obstinate daughter!

When scarce in their teens, they have wit to perplex us,
With letters and lovers for ever they vex us,
While each still rejects the fair suitor you've brought her,
Oh, what a plague is an obstinate daughter!
Wrangling and jangling,
Flouting and pouting,
Oh, what a plague is an obstinate daughter!

Enter LOUISA, *dressed as the* DUENNA, *with Cardinal and Veil, seeming to cry.*

Jerome. This way, mistress, this way—what, I warrant, a tender parting; soh! tears of turpentine down those deal cheeks—Ay, you may well hide your head—yes, whine till your heart breaks; but I'll not hear one word of excuse—so you are right to be dumb,—this way, this way. [*Exeunt.*

Enter DUENNA.

Duenna. So speed you well, sagacious Don Jerome! Oh, rare effects of passion and obstinacy—now shall I try whether I can't play the fine lady as well as my mistress, and if I succeed, I may be a fine lady for the rest of my life—I'll lose no time to equip myself. [*Exit.*

SCENE IV.

The Court before DON JEROME'S *House.*

Enter DON JEROME *and* LOUISA.

Jerome. Come, mistress, there is your way—The world lies before you, so troop, thou antiquated Eve,

thou original sin—hold, yonder is some fellow skulking, perhaps it is Antonio—go to him, d'ye hear, and tell him to make you amends, and as he has got you turned away, tell him I say it is but just he should take you himself, go. [*Exit* LOUISA.] Soh! I am rid of her, thank Heaven! and now I shall be able to keep my oath, and confine my daughter with better security. [*Exit.*

SCENE V

The Piazza.

Enter CLARA *and her* MAID.

Maid. But where, madam, is it you intend to go?

Clara. Any where to avoid the selfish violence of my mother-in-law, and Ferdinand's insolent importunity.

Maid. Indeed, ma'am, since we have profited by Don Ferdinand's key, in making our escape, I think we had best find him, if it were only to thank him.

Clara. No—he has offended me exceedingly. [*Retire.*

Enter LOUISA.

Louisa. So I have succeeded in being turned out of doors—but how shall I find Antonio? I dare not enquire for him, for fear of being discovered; I would send to my friend Clara, but that I doubt her prudery would condemn me.

Maid. Then suppose, ma'am, you were to try if your friend Donna Louisa would not receive you.

Clara. No, her notions of filial duty are so severe, she would certainly betray me.

Louisa. Clara is of a cold temper, and would think this step of mine highly forward.

Clara. Louisa's respect for her father is so great, she would not credit the unkindness of mine.

[LOUISA *turns, and sees* CLARA *and* MAID.

Louisa. Ha! who are those? sure one is Clara—if it be, I'll trust her—Clara! [*Advances.*

Clara. Louisa! and in masquerade too!

Louisa You will be more surprised when I tell you, that I have run away from my father.

Clara. Surprised indeed! and I should certainly chide you most horridly, only that I have just run away from mine.

Louisa. My dear Clara! [*Embrace.*

Clara. Dear sister truant! and whither are you going?

Louisa. To find the man I love, to be sure—And, I presume, you would have no aversion to meet with my brother?

Clara. Indeed I should—he has behaved so ill to me, I don't believe I shall ever forgive him.

AIR—CLARA.

When sable night, each drooping plant restoring,
Wept o'er the flowers her breath did cheer,
As some sad widow o'er her babe deploring,
Wakes its beauty with a tear;
When all did sleep, whose weary hearts did borrow
One hour from love and care to rest,
Lo! as I press'd my couch in silent sorrow,
My lover caught me to his breast;
He vow'd he came to save me
From those who would enslave me!
Then kneeling,
Kisses stealing,
Endless faith he swore,

But soon I chid him thence,
For had his fond pretence
Obtain'd one favour then,
And he had press'd again,
I fear'd my treacherous heart might grant him more.

Louisa. Well, for all this, I would have sent him to plead his pardon, but that I would not yet a while have him know of my flight. And where do you hope to find protection?

Clara. The Lady Abbess of the convent of St Catherine is a relation and kind friend of mine—I shall be secure with her, and you had best go thither with me.

Louisa. No; I am determined to find Antonio first; and, as I live, here comes the very man I will employ to seek him for me.

Clara. Who is he? he's a strange figure!

Louisa. Yes; that sweet creature is the man whom my father has fixed on for my husband.

Clara. And will you speak to him? are you mad?

Louisa. He is the fittest man in the world for my purpose—for, though I was to have married him to-morrow, he is the only man in Seville, who, I am sure, never saw me in his life.

Clara. And how do you know him?

Louisa. He arrived but yesterday, and he was shown to me from the window, as he visited my father.

Clara. Well, I'll begone.

Louisa. Hold, my dear Clara—a thought has struck me—will you give me leave to borrow your name, as I see occasion?

Clara. It will but disgrace you—but use it as you please—I dare not stay—[*Going.*]—but, Louisa, if you should see your brother, be sure you don't inform him, that I have taken refuge with the Dame Prior of the convent of St Catherine, on the left-hand side of the piazza, which leads to the church of St Anthony.

Louisa. Ha! ha! ha! I'll be very particular in my directions where he may not find you. [*Exeunt* CLARA *and* MAID.] So! my swain, yonder, has done admiring himself, and draws nearer. [*Retires.*

Enter ISAAC *and* CARLOS; ISAAC *with a Pocket Glass.*

Isaac. [*Looking in the Glass.*] I tell you, friend Carlos, I will please myself in the habit of my chin.

Carlos. But, my dear friend, how can you think to please a lady with such a face?

Isaac. Why, what's the matter with the face? I think it is a very engaging face; and, I am sure, a lady must have very little taste, who could dislike my beard. [*Sees* LOUISA.] See now!—I'll die if here is not a little damsel struck with it already.

Louisa. Signior, are you disposed to oblige a lady, who greatly wants your assistance? [*Unveils.*

Isaac. Egad, a very pretty black-eyed girl! she has certainly taken a fancy to me, Carlos—first, ma'am, I must beg the favour of your name.

Louisa. So! it's well I am provided. [*Aside.*] My name, sir, is Donna Clara d'Almanza.

Isaac. What!—Don Gusman's daughter? I'faith, I just now heard she was missing.

Louisa. But sure, sir, you have too much gallantry and honour to betray me, whose fault is love?

Isaac. So! a passion for me! poor girl! Why, ma'am, as for betraying you, I don't see how I could get any thing by it; so you may rely on my honour; but as for your love, I am sorry your case is so desperate.

Louisa. Why so, signior?

Isaac. Because I am positively engaged to another—an't I, Carlos?

Louisa. Nay, but hear me.

Isaac. No, no; what should I hear for? It is impossible for me to court you in an honourable way;

and, for any thing else, if I were to comply now, I suppose you have some ungrateful brother, or cousin, who would want to cut my throat for my civility—so, truly, you had best go home again.

Louisa. Odious wretch! [*Aside.*] But, good signior, it is Antonio d'Ercilla, on whose account I have eloped.

Isaac. How! what! it is not with me, then, that you are in love?

Louisa. No, indeed, it is not.

Isaac. Then you are a forward, impertinent simpleton! and I shall certainly acquaint your father.

Louisa. Is this your gallantry?

Isaac. Yet hold—Antonio D'Ercilla, did you say? egad, I may make something of this—Antonio D'Ercilla.

Louisa. Yes; and, if ever you hope to prosper in love, you will bring me to him.

Isaac. By St Iago and I will too—Carlos, this Antonio is one who rivals me (as I have heard) with Louisa—now, if I could hamper him with this girl, I should have the field to myself; hey, Carlos! A lucky thought, isn't it?

Carlos. Yes, very good—very good—

Isaac. Ah! this little brain is never at a loss—cunning Isaac! cunning rogue! Donna Clara, will you trust yourself a while to my friend's direction?

Louisa. May I rely on you, good signior.

Carlos. Lady, it is impossible I should deceive you.

AIR.

Had I a heart for falsehood framed,
I ne'er could injure you;
For though your tongue no promise claim'd,
Your charms would make me true.

To you no soul shall bear deceit,
No stranger offer wrong;
But friends in all the aged you'll meet,
And lovers in the young.

But when they learn that you have blest
Another with your heart,
They'll bid aspiring passions rest,
And act a brother's part;
Then, lady, dread not here deceit,
Nor fear to suffer wrong;
For friends in all the aged you'll meet,
And brothers in the young.

Isaac. I'll conduct the lady to my lodgings, Carlos; I must haste to Don Jerome—perhaps you know Louisa, ma'am. She is divinely handsome—isn't she?

Louisa. You must excuse me not joining with you.

Isaac. Why, I have heard it on all hands.

Louisa. Her father is uncommonly partial to her; but I believe you will find she has rather a matronly air.

Isaac. Carlos, this is all envy—you pretty girls never speak well of one another—hark ye, find out Antonio, and I'll saddle him with this scrape, I warrant! Oh, 'twas the luckiest thought!—Donna Clara, your very obedient—Carlos, to your post.

DUET.

Isaac. *My mistress expects me, and I must go to her,*
Or how can I hope for a smile?
Louisa. *Soon may you return a prosperous wooer,*
But think what I suffer the while:

Alone, and away from the man whom I love,
In strangers I'm forced to confide.

Isaac. *Dear lady, my friend you may trust, and he'll prove,*
Your servant, protector, and guide.

AIR—CARLOS.

Gentle maid, ah! why suspect me?
Let me serve thee—then reject me.
Canst thou trust, and I deceive thee?
Art thou sad, and shall I grieve thee?
Gentle maid, ah! why suspect me?
Let me serve thee—then reject me.

TRIO.

Louisa. *Never may'st thou happy be,*
If in aught thou'rt false to me.

Isaac. *Never may he happy be,*
If in aught he's false to thee.

Carlos. *Never may I happy be,*
If in aught I'm false to thee.

Louisa. *Never may'st thou, &c.*
Isaac. *Never may he, &c.*
Carlos. *Never may I, &c.* [Exeunt.

ACT THE SECOND.

SCENE I.

A Library in DON JEROME'S *House.*

Enter DON JEROME *and* ISAAC.

Jerome. Ha! ha! ha! run away from her father! has she given him the slip? Ha! ha! ha! poor Don Guzman!

Isaac. Ay; and I am to conduct her to Antonio; by which means you see I shall hamper him so that he can give me no disturbance with your daughter—this is trap, isn't it? a nice stroke of cunning, heh?

Jerome. Excellent! excellent! yes, yes, carry her to him, hamper him by all means, ha! ha! ha! poor Don Guzman! an old fool! imposed on by a girl!

Isaac. Nay, they have the cunning of serpents, that's the truth on't.

Jerome. Psha! they are cunning only when they have fools to deal with—why don't my girl play me such a trick—let her cunning overreach my caution, I say—heh, little Isaac!

Isaac. True, true; or let me see any of the sex make a fool of me—No, no, egad, little Solomon, (as my aunt used to call me) understands tricking a little too well.

Jerome. Ay, but such a driveller as Don Guzman.

Isaac. And such a dupe as Antonio.

* *

Jerome. True; sure never were seen such a couple of credulous simpletons; but come, 'tis time you should see my daughter—you must carry on the siege by yourself, friend Isaac.

Isaac. Sir, you'll introduce—

Jerome. No—I have sworn a solemn oath not to see or speak to her till she renounces her disobedience; win her to that, and she gains a father and a husband at once.

Isaac. Gad, I shall never be able to deal with her alone; nothing keeps me in such awe as perfect beauty—now there is something consoling and encouraging in ugliness.

SONG.

Give Isaac the nymph who no beauty can boast,
But health and good humour to make her his toast,
If straight, I don't mind whether slender or fat,
And six feet or four—we'll ne'er quarrel for that.

Whate'er her complexion, I vow I don't care,
If brown it is lasting, more pleasing if fair;
And though in her face I no dimples should see,
Let her smile, and each dell is a dimple to me.

Let her locks be the reddest that ever were seen,
And her eyes may be e'en any colour but green,
Be they light, grey or black, their lustre and hue,
I swear I've no choice, only let her have two.

'Tis true I'd dispense with a throne on her back,
And white teeth, I own, are genteeler than black,
A little round chin too's a beauty, I've heard,
But I only desire she mayn't have a beard.

Jerome. You will change your note, my friend, when you've seen Louisa.

Isaac. Oh, Don Jerome, the honour of your alliance—

Jerome. Ay, but her beauty will affect you—she is, though I say it, who am her father, a very prodigy—there you will see features with an eye like mine—yes i'faith, there is a kind of wicked sparkling—something of a roguish brightness, that shows her to be my own.

Isaac. Pretty rogue!

Jerome. Then, when she smiles, you'll see a little dimple in one cheek only; a beauty it is certainly, yet you shall not say which is prettiest, the cheek with the dimple, or the cheek without.

Isaac. Pretty rogue!

Jerome. Then the roses on those cheeks are shaded with a sort of velvet down, that gives a delicacy to the glow of health.

Isaac. Pretty rogue!

Jerome. Her skin pure dimity, yet more fair, being spangled here and there with a golden freckle.

Isaac. Charming pretty rogue! pray how is the tone of her voice?

Jerome. Remarkably pleasing—but if you could prevail on her to sing, you would be enchanted—she is a nightingale—a Virginian nightingale—but come, come; her maid shall conduct you to her antichamber.

Isaac. Well, egad, I'll pluck up resolution, and meet her frowns intrepidly.

Jerome. Ay! woo her briskly—win her and give me a proof of your address, my little Solomon.

Isaac. But hold—I expect my friend Carlos to call on me here—If he comes will you send him to me?

Jerome. I will—Lauretta, come—she'll show you to the room—what! do you droop? here's a mournful face to make love with! [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

LOUISA'S *Dressing Room.*

Enter MAID *and* ISAAC.

Maid. Sir, my mistress will wait on you presently. [*Goes to the Door.*

Isaac. When she's at leisure—don't hurry her. [*Exit* MAID.] I wish I had ever practised a love scene—I doubt I shall make a poor figure—I couldn't be more afraid, if I was going before the Inquisition—so! the door opens—yes, she's coming—the very rustling of her silk has a disdainful sound.

Enter DUENNA, *dressed as* LOUISA.

Now dar'n't I look round for the soul of me—her beauty will certainly strike me dumb if I do. I wish she'd speak first.

Duenna. Sir, I attend your pleasure.

Isaac. So! the ice is broke, and a pretty civil beginning too! hem! madam—miss—I'm all attention.

Duenna. Nay, sir, 'tis I who should listen, and you propose.

Isaac. Egad, this isn't so disdainful neither—I believe I may venture to look—no—I dar'n't—one glance of those roguish sparklers would fix me again.

Duenna. You seem thoughtful, sir—let me persuade you to sit down.

Isaac. So, so; she mollifies apace—she's struck with my figure! this attitude has had its effect.

Duenna. Come, sir, here's a chair.

Isaac. Madam, the greatness of your goodness over-

powers me—that a lady so lovely should deign to turn her beauteous eyes on me so.

[*She takes his Hand, he turns and sees her.*

Duenna. You seem surprised at my condescension.

Isaac. Why, yes, madam, I am a little surprised at it.—Zounds! this can never be Louisa—she's as old as my mother! [*Aside.*

Duenna. But former prepossessions give way to my father's commands.

Isaac. [*Aside.*] Her father! Yes, 'tis she then—Lord, lord; how blind some parents are!

Duenna. Signor Isaac.

Isaac. Truly, the little damsel was right—she has rather a matronly air indeed! ah! 'tis well my affections are fixed on her fortune, and not her person.

Duenna. Signor, won't you sit? [*She sits.*

Isaac. Pardon me, madam, I have scarce recovered my astonishment at—your condescension, madam—she has the devil's own dimples to be sure! [*Aside.*

Duenna. I do not wonder, sir, that you are surprised at my affability—I own, signor, that I was vastly prepossessed against you, and being teased by my father, I did give some encouragement to Antonio; but then, sir, you were described to me as a quite different person.

Isaac. Ay, and so you were to me, upon my soul, madam.

Duenna. But when I saw you, I was never more struck in my life.

Isaac. That was just my case too, madam: I was struck all on a heap, for my part.

Duenna. Well, sir, I see our misapprehension has been mutual—you expected to find me haughty and averse, and I was taught to believe you a little, black, snub-nosed fellow, without person, manners, or address.

Isaac. Egad, I wish she had answer'd her picture as well.

Duenna. But, sir, your air is noble—something so

liberal in your carriage, with so penetrating an eye, and so bewitching a smile!

Isaac. Egad, now I look at her again, I don't think she is so ugly.

Duenna. So little like a Jew, and so much like a gentleman!

Isaac. Well, certainly there is something pleasing in the tone of her voice.

Duenna. You will pardon this breach of decorum in praising you thus, but my joy at being so agreeably deceived has given me such a flow of spirits!

Isaac. O, dear lady, may I thank those dear lips for this goodness. [*Kisses her.*] Why, she has a pretty sort of velvet down, that's the truth on't! [*Aside.*

Duenna. O, sir, you have the most insinuating manner, but indeed you should get rid of that odious beard—one might as well kiss an hedge-hog.

Isaac. Yes, ma'am, the razor wouldn't be amiss—for either of us. [*Aside.*] Could you favour me with a song?

Duenna. Willingly, sir, though I am rather hoarse—ahem! [*Begins to sing.*

Isaac. Very like a Virginia nightingale—ma'am, I perceive you're hoarse—I beg you will not distress—

Duenna. Oh, not in the least distressed;—now, sir.

SONG.

When a tender maid
Is first essay'd,
By some admiring swain,
How her blushes rise,
If she meets his eyes,
While he unfolds his pain;
If he takes her hand, she trembles quite,
Touch her lips, and she swoons outright,
While a pit a pat, &c.
Her heart avows her fright.

But in time appear
Fewer signs of fear,
The youth she boldly views;
If her hand he grasps,
Or her bosom clasps,
No mantling blush ensues.
Then to church well pleased the lovers move,
While her smiles her contentment prove,
And a pit a pat, &c.
Her heart avows her love.

Isaac. Charming, ma'am! Enchanting! and, truly, your notes put me in mind of one that's very dear to me; a lady, indeed, whom you greatly resemble!

Duenna. How! is there, then, another so dear to you?

Isaac. O, no, ma'am, you mistake; it was my mother I meant.

Duenna. Come, sir, I see you are amazed and confounded at my condescension, and know not what to say.

Isaac. It is very true, indeed, ma'am; but it is a judgment, I look on it as a judgment on me, for delaying to urge the time when you'll permit me to complete my happiness, by acquainting Don Jerome with your condescension.

Duenna. Sir, I must frankly own to you, that I can never be yours with my father's consent.

Isaac. Good lack! how so?

Duenna. When my father, in his passion, swore he would never see me again till I acquiesced in his will, I also made a vow, that I would never take a husband from his hand; nothing shall make me break that oath: but, if you have spirit and contrivance enough to carry me off without his knowledge, I'm yours.

Isaac. Hum!

Duenna. Nay, sir, if you hesitate——

Isaac. I'faith, no bad whim this—if I take her at

her word, I shall secure her fortune, and avoid making any settlement in return; thus, I shall not only cheat the lover, but the father too—Oh, cunning rogue, Isaac! Ay, ay, let this little brain alone—— Egad, I'll take her in the mind.

Duenna. Well, sir, what's your determination?

Isaac. Madam, I was dumb only from rapture—I applaud your spirit, and joyfully close with your proposal; for which, thus let me, on this lily hand, express my gratitude.

Duenna. Well, sir, you must get my father's consent to walk with me in the garden. But by no means inform him of my kindness to you.

Isaac. No, to be sure, that would spoil all: But, trust me, when tricking is the word—let me alone for a piece of cunning; this very day you shall be out of his power.

Duenna. Well, I leave the management of it all to you; I perceive plain, sir, that you are not one that can be easily outwitted.

Isaac. Egad, you're right, madam—you're right, i'faith.

Enter MAID.

Maid. Here's a gentleman at the door, who begs permission to speak with Signor Isaac.

Isaac. A friend of mine, ma'am, and a trusty friend—let him come in. [*Exit* MAID.] He is one to be depended on, ma'am.

Enter CARLOS.

So, coz. [*Aside.*

Carlos. I have left Donna Clara at your lodgings—but can nowhere find Antonio.

Isaac. Well, I will search him out myself—Carlos, you rogue, I thrive, I prosper.

Carlos. Where is your mistress?

Isaac. There, you booby, there she stands.

Carlos. Why she's damned ugly!

Isaac. Hush! [*Stops his mouth.*

Duenna. What is your friend saying, signor?

Isaac. Oh, ma'am, he is expressing his raptures at such charms as he never saw before, eh, Carlos?

Carlos. Ay, such as I never saw before, indeed!

Duenna. You are a very obliging gentleman—well, Signor Isaac, I believe we had better part for the present. Remember our plan.

Isaac. Oh, ma'am, it is written in my heart, fixed as the image of those divine beauties—adieu, idol of my soul!—yet once more permit me——

[*Kisses her.*

Duenna. Sweet, courteous sir, adieu!

Isaac. Your slave eternally—Come, Carlos, say something civil at taking leave.

Carlos. I'faith, Isaac, she is the hardest woman to compliment I ever saw; however, I'll try something I had studied for the occasion.

SONG.

Ah! sure a pair was never seen,
So justly form'd to meet by nature;
The youth excelling so in men,
The maid in ev'ry grace of feature.
Oh, how happy are such lovers,
When kindred beauties each discovers,
For surely she
Was made for thee,
And thou to bless this lovely creature.

So mild your looks, your children thence,
Will early learn the task of duty,
The boys with all their father's sense,
The girls with all their mother's beauty.

Oh! how happy to inherit
At once such graces and such spirit!
Thus while you live
May fortune give
Each blessing equal to your merit.
[*Exeunt* ISAAC, CARLOS, DUENNA.

SCENE III.

A Library.

JEROME *and* FERDINAND *dicovered.*

Jerome. Object to Antonio? I have said it: his poverty, can you acquit him of that?

Ferd. Sir, I own he is not over rich; but he is of as ancient and honourable a family as any in the kingdom.

Jerome. Yes, I know the beggars are a very ancient family in most kingdoms; but never in great repute, boy.

Ferd. Antonio, sir, has many amiable qualities.

Jerome. But he is poor; can you clear him of that, I say? Is he not a gay, dissipated rake, who has squandered his patrimony?

Ferd. Sir, he inherited but little; and that, his generosity, more than his profuseness, has stripped him of; but he has never sullied his honour, which, with his title, has outlived his means.

Jerome. Pshaw! you talk like a blockhead! nobility, without an estate, is as ridiculous as gold-lace on a frize coat.

Ferd. This language, sir, would better become a Dutch, or English trader, than a Spaniard.

Jerome. Yes; and those Dutch and English traders, as you call them, are the wiser people. Why, booby, in England, they were formerly as nice, as to

birth and family, as we are: but they have long discovered what a wonderful purifier gold is; and now, no one there regards pedigree in any thing but a horse —Oh here comes Isaac! I hope he has prospered in his suit.

Ferd. Doubtless, that agreeble figure of his must have helped his suit surprisingly.

Jerome. How now? [FERDINAND *walks aside.*

Enter ISAAC.

Well, my friend, have you softened her?

Isaac. Oh, yes; I have softened her.

Jerome. What, does she come to?

Isaac Why, truly, she was kinder than I expected to find her.

Jerome. And the dear little angel was civil, hey?

Isaac. Yes, the pretty little angel was very civil.

Jerome. I'm transported to hear it—well, and you were astonished at her beauty, hey?

Isaac. I was astonished, indeed! pray, how old is miss?

Jerome. How old? let me see—eight and twelve—she is twenty.

Isaac. Twenty?

Jerome. Ay, to a month.

Isaac. Then, upon my soul, she is the oldest looking girl of her age in Christendom!

Jerome. Do you think so? but, I believe, you will not see a prettier girl.

Isaac. Here and there one.

Jerome. Louisa has the family face.

Isaac. Yes, 'egad, I should have taken it for a family face, and one that has been in the family some time too. [*Aside.*

Jerome. She has her father's eyes.

Isaac. Truly I should have guessed them to have been so—If she had her mother's spectacles, I believe she would not see the worse. [*Aside.*

Jerome. Her aunt Ursula's nose, and her grandmother's forehead, to a hair.

Isaac. Ay, 'faith, and her grandfather's chin to a hair. [*Aside.*

Jerome. Well, if she was but as dutiful as she's handsome—and hark ye, friend Isaac, she is none of your made-up beauties—her charms are of the lasting kind.

Isaac. I'faith, so they should—for if she be but twenty now, she may double her age, before her years will overtake her face.

Jerome. Why, zounds, Master Isaac! you are not sneering, are you?

Isaac. Why now, seriously, Don Jerome, do you think your daughter handsome?

Jerome. By this light, she's as handsome a girl as any in Seville.

Isaac. Then, by these eyes, I think her as plain a woman as ever I beheld.

Jerome. By St Iago, you must be blind.

Isaac. No, no; 'tis you are partial.

Jerome. How! have I neither sense nor taste? If a fair skin, fine eyes, teeth of ivory, with a lovely bloom, and a delicate shape—if these, with a heavenly voice, and a world of grace, are not charms, I know not what you call beautiful.

Isaac. Good lack, with what eyes a father sees!—As I have life, she is the very reverse of all this; as for the dimity skin you told me of, I swear, 'tis a thorough nankeen as ever I saw! for her eyes, their utmost merit is not squinting—for her teeth, where there is one of ivory, its neighbour is pure ebony, black and white alternately, just like the keys of an harpsichord. Then, as to her singing, and heavenly voice—by this hand, she has a shrill, cracked pipe, that sounds, for all the world, like a child's trumpet.

Jerome. Why, you little Hebrew scoundrel, do you mean to insult me? out of my house, I say!

Ferd. Dear sir, what's the matter?

Jerome. Why, this Israelite here has the impudence to say your sister's ugly.

Ferd. He must be either blind or insolent.

Isaac. So, I find they are all in a story. 'Egad, I believe I have gone too far!

Ferd. Sure, sir, there must be some mistake; it can't be my sister whom he has seen.

Jerome. 'Sdeath! you are as great a fool as he! what mistake can there be? did not I lock up Louisa, and hav'n't I the key in my own pocket? And didn't her maid show him into the dressing room? and yet you talk of a mistake; no, the Portuguese meant to insult me—and, but that this roof protects him, old as I am, this sword should do me justice.

Isaac. I must get off as well as I can—her fortune is not the less handsome.

DUET.

Isaac. *Believe me, good sir, I ne'er meant to offend.*
My mistress I love, and I value my friend;
To win her, and wed her, is still my request,
For better, for worse, and I swear I don't jest.

Jerome. *Zounds! you'd best not provoke me, my rage is so high.*

Isaac. *Hold him fast, I beseech you, his rage is so high;*
Good sir, you're too hot, and this place I must fly.

Jerome. *You're a knave and a sot, and this place you'd best fly.*

Isaac. Don Jerome, come now, let us lay aside all joking, and be serious.

Jerome. How?

Isaac. Ha! ha! ha! I'll be hanged if you hav'n't taken my abuse of your daughter seriously.

Jerome. You meant it so, did not you?

Isaac. O mercy, no! a joke—just to try how angry it would make you.

Jerome. Was that all, i'faith? I didn't know you had been such a wag, ha! ha! ha! By St Iago! you made me very angry though—well, and you do think Louisa handsome?

Isaac. Handsome! Venus de Medicis was a sybil to her.

Jerome. Give me your hand, you little jocose rogue—'Egad, I thought we had been all off.

Ferd. So! I was in hopes this would have been a quarrel; but I find the Jew is too cunning.

Jerome. Ay, this gust of passion has made me dry—I am seldom ruffled—order some wine in the next room—let us drink the poor girl's health—poor Louisa! ugly, heh! Ha! ha! ha! 'Twas a very good joke, indeed!

Isaac. And a very true one, for all that.

Jerome. And, Ferdinand, I insist upon your drinking success to my friend.

Ferd. Sir, I will drink success to my friend, with all my heart.

Jerome. Come, little Solomon, if any sparks of anger had remained, this would be the only way to quench them.

TRIO.

A bumper of good liquor
Will end a contest quicker
Than justice, judge, or vicar.
So fill a cheerful glass,
And let good humour pass.

But if more deep the quarrel,
Why, sooner drain the barrel,
Than be the hateful fellow,
That's crabbed when he is mellow.
A bumper, &c. [Exeunt.

SCENE IV.

ISAAC'S *Lodgings.*

Enter LOUISA.

Louisa. Was ever truant daughter so whimsically circumstanced as I am! I have sent my intended husband to look after my lover—the man of my father's choice is gone to bring me the man of my own—but how dispiriting is this interval of expectation!

Enter CARLOS.

So, friend, is Antonio found?

Carlos. I could not meet with him, lady; but I doubt not, my friend Isaac will be here with him presently.

Louisa. Oh, shame! you have used no diligence—Is this your courtesy to a lady, who has trusted herself to your protection?

Carlos. Indeed, madam, I have not been remiss.

Louisa. Well, well; but if either of you had known how each moment of delay weighs upon the heart of her who loves, and waits the object of her love, oh, ye would not then have trifled thus!

Carlos. Alas, I know it well!

Louisa. Were you ever in love then?

Carlos. I was, lady; but while I have life, will never be again.

Louisa. Was your mistress so cruel?

Carlos. If she had always been so, I should have been happier.

SONG.

O, had my love ne'er smiled on me,
I ne'er had known such anguish;
But think how false, how cruel she,
To bid me cease to languish.
To bid me hope her hand to gain,
Breathe on a flame half perish'd;
And then with cold and fix'd disdain,
To kill the hope she cherish'd.

Not worse his fate, who on a wreck,
That drove as winds did blow it;
Silent had left the shatter'd deck,
To find a grave below it.
Then land was cried—no more resign'd,
He glow'd with joy to hear it;
Not worse his fate, his woe to find,
The wreck must sink ere near it.

Louisa. As I live, here is your friend coming with Antonio—I'll retire for a moment to surprise him. [*Exit.*

Enter ISAAC *and* ANTONIO.

Ant. Indeed, my good friend, you must be mistaken. Clara D'Almanza in love with me, and employ you to bring me to meet her! It is impossible!

Isaac. That you shall see in an instant—Carlos, where is the lady? [CARLOS *points to the Door.*] In the next room is she?

Ant. Nay, if that lady is really here, she certainly wants me to conduct her to a dear friend of mine, who has long been her lover.

Isaac. Pshaw! I tell you 'tis no such thing—you are the man she wants, and nobody but you. Here's ado to persuade you to take a pretty girl that's dying for you!.

Ant. But I have no affection for this lady.

Isaac. And you have for Louisa, hey? but take my word for it, Antonio, you have no chance there—so you may as well secure the good that offers itself to you.

Ant. And could you reconcile it to your conscience, to supplant your friend?

Isaac. Pish! Conscience has no more to do with gallantry, than it has with politics—why, you are no honest fellow, if love can't make a rogue of you—so come, do go in, and speak to her at last.

Ant. Well, I have no objection to that.

Isaac. [*Opens the Door.*] There—there she is—yonder by the window—get in, do—[*Pushes him in, and half shuts the Door.*] now, Carlos, now I shall hamper him, I warrant—stay, I'll peep how they go on—'egad, he looks confoundedly posed—now she's coaxing him—see, Carlos, he begins to come to—ay, ay, he'll soon forget his conscience.

Carlos. Look—now they are both laughing!

Isaac. Ay, so they are—yes, yes, they are laughing at that dear friend he talked of—ay, poor devil, they have outwitted him.

Carlos. Now he's kissing her hand.

Isaac. Yes, yes, 'faith, they're agreed—he's caught, he's entangled—my dear Carlos, we have brought it about. Oh, this little cunning head! I'm a Machiavel—a very Machiavel.

Carlos. I hear somebody enquiring for you—I'll see who it is. [*Exit* CARLOS.

Enter ANTONIO *and* LOUISA.

Ant. Well, my good friend, this lady has so entirely convinced me of the certainty of your success at Don Jerome's, that I now resign my pretensions there.

Isaac. You never did a wiser thing, believe me—and as for deceiving your friend, that's nothing at all —tricking is all fair in love, isn't it, ma'am?

Louisa. Certainly, sir, and I am particularly glad to find you are of that opinion.

Isaac. O lud! yes, ma'am—let any one outwit me, that can, I say—but here let me join your hands—— there, you lucky rogue! I wish you happily married, from the bottom of my soul!

Louisa. And I am sure if you wish it, no one else should prevent it.

Isaac. Now, Antonio, we are rivals no more; so let us be friends, will you?

Ant. With all my heart, Isaac.

Isaac. It is not every man, let me tell you, that would have taken such pains, or been so generous to a rival.

Ant. No, 'faith; I don't believe there's another beside yourself in all Spain.

Isaac. Well, but you resign all pretensions to the other lady?

Ant. That I do, most sincerely.

Isaac. I doubt you have a little hankering there still.

Ant. None in the least, upon my soul.

Isaac. I mean after her fortune.

Ant. No, believe me——You are heartily welcome to every thing she has.

Isaac. Well, i'faith, you have the best of the bargain, as to beauty, twenty to one—now I'll tell you a secret—I am to carry off Louisa this very evening.

Louisa. Indeed!

Isaac. Yes, she has sworn not to take a husband from her father's hand—so, I've persuaded him to trust her to walk with me in the garden, and then we shall give him the slip.

Louisa. And is Don Jerome to know nothing of this?

Isaac. O lud, no! there lies the jest—Don't you see that, by this step, I overreach him? I shall be entitled to the girl's fortune, without settling a ducat on her, ha! ha! ha! I'm a cunning dog, an't I? A sly little villain, eh?

Ant. Ha! ha! ha! you are indeed!

Isaac. Roguish, you'll say, but keen, eh?—devilish keen?

Ant. So you are indeed—keen—very keen.

Isaac. And what a laugh we shall have at Don Jerome's, when the truth comes out! hey?

Louisa. Yes, I'll answer for it, we shall have a good laugh when the truth comes out, ha! ha! ha!

Enter CARLOS.

Carlos. Here are the dancers come to practise the fandango, you intended to have honoured Donna Louisa with.

Isaac. O, I sha'n't want them, but as I must pay them, I'll see a caper for my money—will you excuse me?

Louisa. Willingly.

Isaac. Here's my friend, whom you may command for any services. Madam, your most obedient—Antonio, I wish you all happiness.—Oh, the easy blockhead! what a tool I have made of him!—This was a master-piece! [*Exit.*

Louisa. Carlos, will you be my guard again, and convey me to the convent of St Catharine?

Ant. Why, Louisa—why should you go there?

Louisa. I have my reasons, and you must not be seen to go with me; I shall write from thence to my father; perhaps, when he finds what he has driven me to, he may relent.

Ant. I have no hope from him—O Louisa! in these arms should be your sanctuary.

Louisa. Be patient but for a little while—my father cannot force me from thence. But let me see you there before evening, and I will explain myself.

Ant. I shall obey.

Louisa. Come, friend—Antonio, Carlos has been a lover himself.

Ant. Then he knows the value of his trust.

Carlos. You shall not find me unfaithful.

TRIO.

Soft pity never leaves the gentle breast
Where love has been received a welcome guest,
As wand'ring saints poor huts have sacred made,
He hallows ev'ry heart he once has sway'd;
And when his presence we no longer share,
Still leaves compassion as a relic there. [Exeunt.

ACT THE THIRD.

SCENE I.

A Library.

Enter JEROME *and* SERVANT.

Jerome. Why, I never was so amazed in my life! Louisa gone off with Isaac Mendoza! what! steal away with the very man whom I wanted her to marry—elope with her own husband, as it were—it is impossible!

Serv. Her maid says, sir, they had your leave to walk in the garden, while you was abroad—The door by the shrubbery was found open, and they have not been heard of since. [*Exit.*

Jerome. Well, it is the most unaccountable affair! 'sdeath! there is certainly some infernal mystery in it, I can't comprehend!

Enter SECOND SERVANT, *with a Letter.*

Serv. Here is a letter, sir, from Signor Isaac. [*Exit.*

Jerome. So, so, this will explain—ay, Isaac Mendoza—let me see— *Reads.*

Dearest Sir,

You must, doubtless, be much surprised at my flight with your daughter—Yes, 'faith, and well I may—*I had the happiness to gain her heart at our first inter-*

view—The devil you had!—*But she having unfortunately made a vow not to receive a husband from your hands, I was obliged to comply with her whim*—So, so! —*We shall shortly throw ourselves at your feet, and I hope you will have a blessing ready for one, who will then be*

Your son-in-law,
ISAAC MENDOZA.

A whim, hey? Why, the devil's in the girl, I think! This morning, she would die sooner than have him, and before evening, she runs away with him!—Well, well, my will's accomplished—let the motive be what it will—and the Portuguese, sure, will never deny to fulfil the rest of the article.

Enter SERVANT, *with another Letter.*

Serv. Sir, here's a man below, who says he brought this from my young lady, Donna Louisa. [*Exit.*

Jerome. How! yes it is my daughter's hand indeed! Lord, there was no occasion for them both to write; well, let's see what she says—— [*Reads.*

My dearest Father,

How shall I entreat your pardon for the rash step I have taken—how confess the motive?—Pish! hasn't Isaac just told me the motive?—one would think they weren't together when they wrote—*If I have a spirit too resentful of ill usage, I have also a heart as easily affected by kindness*—So, so, here the whole matter comes out; her resentment for Antonio's ill usage has made her sensible of Isaac's kindness—yes, yes, it is all plain enough—well——*I am not married yet, though with a man, I am convinced, adores me*—Yes, yes, I dare say Isaac is very fond of her—*But I shall anxiously expect your answer, in which, should I be so*

fortunate as to receive your consent, you will make completely happy.

Your ever affectionate daughter
LOUISA.

My consent? to be sure she shall have it!—'egad, I was never better pleased—I have fulfilled my resolution—I knew I should—Oh, there's nothing like obstinacy——Lewis!

Enter SERVANT.

Let the man, who brought the last letter, wait; and get me a pen and ink below. I am impatient to set poor Louisa's heart at rest—holloa! Lewis! Sancho!

Enter SERVANTS.

See, that there be a noble supper provided in the saloon to-night—serve up my best wines, and let me have music, d'ye hear?

Serv. Yes, sir. [*Exeunt.*

Jerome. And order all my doors to be thrown open—admit all guests, with masks or without masks——I'faith, we'll have a night of it—And I'll let them see how merry an old man can be.

SONG.

Oh, the days when I was young,
When I laugh'd in fortune's spite,
Talk'd of love the whole day long,
And with nectar crown'd the night.
Then it was, old father Care,
Little reck'd I of thy frown,
Half thy malice youth could bear,
And the rest a bumper drown.

Truth, they say, lies in a well,
Why, I vow, I ne'er could see,
Let the water-drinkers tell,
There it always lay for me.
For when sparkling wine went round,
Never saw I falsehood's mask,
But still honest truth I found,
In the bottom of each flask.

True, at length my vigour's flown,
I have years to bring decay;
Few the locks, that now I own,
And the few I have are grey.
Yet, old Jerome, thou may'st boast,
While thy spirits do not tire,
Still beneath thy age's frost
Glows a spark of youthful fire. [Exit.

SCENE II.

The New Piazza.

Enter FERDINAND *and* LOPEZ.

Ferd. What, could you gather no tidings of her? Nor guess where she was gone? O Clara! Clara!

Lopez. In truth, sir, I could not.—That she was run away from her father, was in every body's mouth,—and that Don Guzman was in pursuit of her was also a very common report—where she was gone, or what was become of her, no one could take upon them to say.

Ferd. 'Sdeath and fury, you blockhead! she can't be out of Seville.

Lopez. So I said to myself, sir—'Sdeath and fury, you blockhead, says I, she can't be out of Seville—Then some said, she had hanged herself for love; and others have it, Don Antonio had carried her off.

Ferd. 'Tis false, scoundrel! no one said that.

Lopez. Then I misunderstood them, sir.

Ferd. Go, fool, get home, and never let me see you again, till you bring me news of her. [*Exit* LOPEZ.] Oh, how my fondness for this ungrateful girl has hurt my disposition!

Enter ISAAC.

Isaac. So, I have her safe, and have only to find a priest to marry us. Antonio now may marry Clara, or not, if he pleases!

Ferd. What? what was that you said of Clara?

Isaac. Oh, Ferdinand! my brother-in-law, that shall be, who thought of meeting you!

Ferd. But what of Clara?

Isaac. I'faith, you shall hear.—This morning, as I was coming down, I met a pretty damsel, who told me her name was Clara d'Almanza, and begged my protection.

Ferd. How?

Isaac. She said she had eloped from her father, Don Guzman, but that love for a young gentleman in Seville was the cause.

Ferd. Oh, Heavens! did she confess it?

Isaac. Oh, yes, she confessed at once—but then, says she, my lover is not informed of my flight, nor suspects my intention.

Ferd. Dear creature! no more I did indeed! Oh, I am the happiest fellow!—[*Aside.*] Well, Isaac!

Isaac. Why, then she entreated me to find him out for her, and bring him to her.

Ferd. Good Heavens, how lucky!—Well, come along, let's lose no time. [*Pulling him.*

Isaac. Zooks! where are we to go?

Ferd. Why, did any thing more pass?

Isaac. Any thing more! yes; the end on't was, that I was moved with her speeches, and complied with her desires.

Ferd. Well, and where is she?

Isaac. Where is she? why, don't I tell you, I complied with her request, and left her safe in the arms of her lover.

Ferd. 'Sdeath, you trifle with me!—I have never seen her.

Isaac. You! O lud, no!—How the devil should you? 'Twas Antonio she wanted: and with Antonio I left her.

Ferd. Hell and madness! [*Aside.*] What, Antonio d'Ercilla?

Isaac. Ay, ay, the very man; and the best part of it was, he was shy of taking her at first—He talked a good deal about honour, and conscience, and deceiving some dear friend; but, lord, we soon overruled that.

Ferd. You did?

Isaac. Oh, yes, presently—such deceit, says he—Pish! says the lady, tricking is all fair in love—but then, my friend, says he—Pshaw! damn your friend, says I.—So, poor wretch, he has no chance—no, no; he may hang himself as soon as he pleases.

Ferd. I must go, or I shall betray myself.

Isaac. But stay, Ferdinand, you ha'n't heard the best of the joke.

Ferd. Curse on your joke.

Isaac. Good lack! what's the matter now? I thought to have diverted you.

Ferd. Be rack'd! tortured! damn'd——

Isaac. Why, sure you are not the poor devil of a

lover, are you? I'faith, as sure as can be, he is—This is a better joke than t'other, ha! ha! ha!

Ferd. What, do you laugh? you vile, mischievous varlet! [*Collars him.*] But that you're beneath my anger, I'd tear your heart out. [*Throws him from him.*

Isaac. O mercy! here's usage for a brother-in-law!

Ferd. But, hark ye, rascal! tell me directly where these false friends are gone, or, by my soul——

[*Draws.*

Isaac. For Heaven's sake, now, my dear brother-in-law, don't be in a rage—I'll recollect as well as I can.

Ferd. Be quick then!

Isaac. I will, I will—but people's memories differ—some have a treacherous memory—now mine is a cowardly memory—it takes to its heels, at sight of a drawn sword, it does, i'faith; and I could as soon fight as recollect.

Ferd. Zounds! tell me the truth, and I won't hurt you.

Isaac. No, no, I know you won't, my dear brother-in-law—but that ill-looking thing there—

Ferd. What, then, you won't tell me?

Isaac. Yes, yes, I will; I'll tell you all, upon my soul—but why need you listen sword in hand?

Ferd. Why, there. [*Puts up.*] Now.

Isaac. Why then, I believe they are gone to—that is, my friend Carlos told me, he had left Donna Clara—dear Ferdinand, keep your hands off—at the convent of St Catharine.

Ferd. St Catharine!

Isaac. Yes; and that Antonio was to come to her there.

Ferd. Is this the truth?

Isaac. It is indeed—and all I know, as I hope for life.

Ferd. Well, coward, take your life—'Tis that false, dishonourable Antonio, who shall feel my vengeance.

Isaac. Ay, ay, kill him—cut his throat, and welcome.

Ferd. But, for Clara—infamy on her! she is not worth my resentment.

Isaac. No more she is, my dear brother-in-law. I'faith, I would not be angry about her—she is not worth it, indeed.

Ferd. 'Tis false! she is worth the enmity of princes.

Isaac. True, true, so she is; and I pity you exceedingly for having lost her.

Ferd. 'Sdeath, you rascal! how durst you talk of pitying me!

Isaac. Oh, dear brother-in-law, I beg pardon, I don't pity you in the least, upon my soul.

Ferd. Get hence, fool, and provoke me no further; nothing but your insignificance saves you.

Isaac. I'faith, then my insignificance is the best friend I have.—I'm going, dear Ferdinand—What a curst hot-headed bully it is! [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.

The Garden of the Convent.

Enter LOUISA *and* CLARA.

Louisa. And you really wish my brother may not find you out?

Clara. Why else have I concealed myself under this disguise?

Louisa. Why, perhaps, because the dress becomes you; for you certainly don't intend to be a nun for life.

Clara. If, indeed, Ferdinand had not offended me so last night.

Louisa. Come, come, it was his fear of losing you made him so rash.

Clara. Well, you may think me cruel—but I swear, if he were here this instant, I believe I should forgive him.

SONG—CLARA.

By him we love offended,
How soon our anger flies!
One day apart, 'tis ended,
Behold him, and it dies.

Last night, your roving brother,
Enraged I bade depart,
And sure his rude presumption
Deserved to lose my heart.

Yet, were he now before me,
In spite of injured pride,
I fear my eyes wou'd pardon
Before my tongue cou'd chide.

Louisa. I protest, Clara, I shall begin to think you are seriously resolved to enter on your probation.

Clara. And, seriously, I very much doubt whether the character of a nun would not become me best.

Louisa. Why, to be sure, the character of a nun is a very becoming one at a masquerade, but no pretty woman, in her senses, ever thought of taking the veil for above a night.

Clara. Yonder I see your Antonio is returned—I shall only interrupt you; ah, Louisa, with what happy eagerness you turn to look for him! [*Exit.*

Enter ANTONIO.

Ant. Well, my Louisa, any news since I left you?

Louisa. None—The messenger is not returned from my father.

Ant. Well, I confess, I do not perceive what we are to expect from him.

Louisa. I shall be easier, however, in having made the trial; I do not doubt your sincerity, Antonio; but there is a chilling air around poverty, that often kills affection, that was not nursed in it—If we would make love our household god, we had best secure him a comfortable roof.

SONG—ANTONIO.

How oft, Louisa, hast thou told,
Nor wilt thou the fond boast disown,
Thou wouldst not lose Antonio's love,
To reign the partner of a throne.
And by those lips, that spoke so kind,
And by that hand, I've press'd to mine,
To be the lord of wealth and power,
By Heav'ns, I would not part with thine!

Then how, my soul, can we be poor,
Who own what kingdoms could not buy?
Of this true heart thou shalt be queen,
In serving thee, a monarch I.
Thus uncontrol'd, in mutual bliss,
And rich in love's exhaustless mine,
Do thou snatch treasures from my lips,
And I'll take kingdoms back from thine.

Enter MAID, *with a Letter.*

Louisa. My father's answer, I suppose.

Ant. My dearest Louisa, you may be assured, that it contains nothing but threats and reproaches.

Louisa. Let us see, however—[*Reads.*] *Dearest daughter, make your lover happy; you have my full consent to marry as your whim has chosen, but be sure come home and sup with your affectionate father.*

Ant. You jest, Louisa!

Louisa. [*Gives him the Letter.*] Read—read.

Ant. 'Tis so, by Heavens!—sure there must be some mistake; but that's none of our business—Now, Louisa, you have no excuse for delay.

Louisa. Shall we not then return and thank my father?

Ant. But first let the priest put it out of his power to recall his word.—I'll fly to procure one.

Louisa. Nay, if you part with me again, perhaps you may lose me.

Ant. Come then—there is a friar of a neighbouring convent is my friend; you have already been diverted by the manners of a nunnery, let us see, whether there is less hypocrisy among the holy fathers.

Louisa. I'm afraid not, Antonio—for in religion, as in friendship, they who profess most are ever the least sincere. [*Exeunt.*

Enter CLARA.

Clara. So, yonder they go, as happy as a mutual and confessed affection can make them, while I am left in solitude. Heigho! love may perhaps excuse the rashness of an elopement from one's friend, but I am sure, nothing but the presence of the man we love can support it—Ha! what do I see! Ferdinand, as I live! how could he gain admission—by potent gold, I suppose, as Antonio did—How eager and disturbed he seems—he shall not know me as yet.

[*Lets down her Veil.*

Enter FERDINAND.

Ferd. Yes, those were certainly they—my information was right. [*Going.*

Clara. [*Stops him.*] Pray, signor, what is your business here?

Ferd. No matter—no matter—Oh, they stop—[*Looks out.*] Yes, that is the perfidious Clara indeed!

Clara. So, a jealous error—I'm glad to see him so moved. [*Aside.*

Ferd. Her disguise can't conceal her—No, no, I know her too well.

Clara. Wonderful discernment! but, signor—

Ferd. Be quiet, good nun, don't tease me—By Heavens, she leans upon his arm, hangs fondly on it! O woman! woman!

Clara. But, signor, who is it you want?

Ferd. Not you, not you, so pr'ythee don't tease me. Yet pray stay—gentle nun, was it not Donna Clara d'Almanza just parted from you?

Clara. Clara d'Almanza, signor, is not yet out of the garden.

Ferd. Ay, ay, I knew I was right—And pray is not that gentleman, now at the porch with her, Antonio d'Ercilla?

Clara. It is indeed, signor.

Ferd. So, so; now but one question more—can you inform me for what purpose they have gone away?

Clara. They are gone to be married, I believe.

Ferd. Very well—enough—now if I don't mar their wedding! [*Exit.*

Clara. [*Unveils.*] I thought jealousy had made lovers quick-sighted, but it has made mine blind—Louisa's story accounts to me for this error, and I am glad to find I have power enough over him to make him so unhappy. But why should not I be present at his surprise when undeceived? When he's through the porch,

I'll follow him; and, perhaps, Louisa shall not singly be a bride.

SONG.

Adieu, thou dreary pile, where never dies
The sullen echo of repentant sighs:
Ye sister mourners of each lonely cell,
Inured to hymns and sorrow, fare ye well;
For happier scenes I fly this darksome grove,
To saints a prison, but a tomb to love. [Exit.

SCENE IV.

A Court before the Priory.

Enter ISAAC, *crossing the Stage.*

Enter ANTONIO.

Ant. What, my friend Isaac!

Isaac. What, Antonio! wish me joy! I have Louisa safe.

Ant. Have you?—I wish you joy with all my soul.

Isaac. Yes, I am come here to procure a priest to marry us.

Ant. So, then we are both on the same errand, I am come to look for Father Paul.

Isaac. Hah! I am glad on't—but, i'faith, he must tack me first, my love is waiting.

Ant. So is mine.—I left her in the porch.

Isaac. Ay, but I am in haste to get back to Don Jerome.

Ant. And so am I too.

Isaac. Well, perhaps he'll save time, and marry us both together—or I'll be your father, and you shall be mine. Come along—but you're obliged to me for all this.

Ant. Yes, yes. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE V.

A Room in the Priory.—FRIARS *at the Table, drinking.*

GLEE AND CHORUS.

This bottle's the sun of our table,
His beams are rosy wine;
We, planets, that are not able,
Without his help to shine.
Let mirth and glee abound,
You'll soon grow bright,
With borrow'd light,
And shine as he goes round.

Paul. Brother Francis, toss the bottle about, and give me your toast.

Francis. Have we drank the abbess of St Ursuline?

Paul. Yes, yes; she was the last.

Francis. Then I'll give you the blue-eyed nun of St Catharine's.

Paul. With all my heart. [*Drinks.*] Pray, brother Augustine, were there any benefactions left in my absence?

Francis. Don Juan Corduba has left a hundred ducats, to remember him in our masses.

Paul. Has he! let them be paid to our wine mer-

chant, and we'll remember him in our cups, which will do just as well. Any thing more?

Aug. Yes; Baptista, the rich miser, who died last week, has bequeathed us a thousand pistoles, and the silver lamp, he used in his own chamber, to burn before the image of St Anthony.

Paul. 'Twas well meant, but we'll employ his money better—Baptista's bounty shall light the living, not the dead.—St Anthony is not afraid to be left in the dark, though he was——See who's there.

[*A Knocking,* FRANCIS *goes to the Door, and opens it.*

Enter PORTER.

Porter. Here's one without in pressing haste to speak with Father Paul.

Francis. Brother Paul!

[PAUL *comes from behind a Curtain, with a Glass of Wine, and in his Hand a Piece of Cake.*

Paul. Here! how durst you, fellow, thus abruptly break in upon our devotions?

Porter. I thought they were finished.

Paul. No, they were not—were they, Brother Francis?

Francis. Not by a bottle each.

Paul. But neither you nor your fellows mark how the hours go—no, you mind nothing but the gratifying of your appetites; ye eat and swill, and sleep, and gormandize, and thrive, while we are wasting in mortification.

Porter. We ask no more than nature craves.

Paul. 'Tis false, ye have more appetites than hairs! and your flushed, sleek, and pampered appearance, is the disgrace of our order—out on't—If you are hungry, can't you be content with the wholesome roots of the earth; and if you are dry, isn't there the crystal spring? [*Drinks.*] Put this away, [*Gives a*

Glass.] and show me where I'm wanted. [PORTER *draws the Glass.*—PAUL, *going, turns.*] So, you would have drank it, if there had been any left. Ah, glutton! glutton! [*Exeunt.*

SCENE VI.

The Court before the Priory.

Enter ISAAC *and* ANTONIO.

Isaac. A plaguy while coming, this same Father Paul—He's detained at vespers, I suppose, poor fellow.

Ant. No, here he comes.

Enter PAUL.

Good Father Paul, I crave your blessing.

Isaac. Yes, good Father Paul, we are come to beg a favour.

Paul. What is it, pray?

Isaac. To marry us, good Father Paul; and in truth thou dost look the very priest of Hymen.

Paul. In short, I may be called so; for I deal in repentance and mortification.

Isaac. No, no, thou seemest an officer of Hymen, because thy presence speaks content and good humour.

Paul. Alas! my appearence is deceitful. Bloated I am, indeed! for fasting is a windy recreation, and it hath swoln me like a bladder.

Ant. But thou hast a good fresh colour in thy face, father; rosy, i'faith.

Paul. Yes, I have blushed for mankind, till the hue of my shame is as fixed as their vices.

Isaac. Good man!

Paul. And I have laboured too, but to what purpose? they continue to sin under my very nose.

Isaac. Efecks, father, I should have guessed as much, for your nose seems to be put to the blush more than any other part of your face.

Paul. Go, you're a wag.

Ant. But, to the purpose, father—will you officiate for us?

Paul. To join young people thus clandestinely is not safe: and, indeed, I have in my heart many weighty reasons against it.

Ant. And I have in my hand many weighty reasons for it. Isaac, hav'n't you an argument or two in our favour about you?

Isaac. Yes, yes; here is a most unanswerable purse.

Paul. For shame! you make me angry: you forget who I am, and when importunate people have forced their trash—ay, into this pocket, here—or into this—why, then the sin was theirs. [*They put Money into his Pockets.*] Fie, now how you distress me! I would return it, but that I must touch it that way, and so wrong my oath.

Ant. Now then, come with us.

Isaac. Ay, now give us your title to joy and rapture.

Paul. Well, when your hour of repentance comes, don't blame me.

Ant. No bad caution to my friend Isaac. [*Aside.*] Well, well, father, do you do your part, and I'll abide the consequence.

Isaac. Ay, and so will I. [*They are going.*

Enter LOUISA, *running.*

Louisa. O, Antonio, Ferdinand is at the porch, and enquiring for us.

Isaac. Who? Don Ferdinand! he's not enquiring for me, I hope.

Ant. Fear not, my love, I'll soon pacify him.

Isaac. Egad, you won't—Antonio, take my advice, and run away: this Ferdinand is the most unmerciful dog! and has the cursedest long sword!—and, upon my soul, he comes on purpose to cut your throat.

Ant. Never fear, never fear.

Isaac. Well, you may stay if you will; but I'll get some one to marry me; for, by St Iago, he shall never marry me again, while I am master of a pair of heels. [*Runs out.*

Enter FERDINAND.

Ferd. So, sir, I have met with you at last.

Ant. Well, sir.

Ferd. Base, treacherous man! whence can a false, deceitful soul, like yours, borrow confidence to look so steadily on the man you've injured?

Ant. Ferdinand, you are too warm:—'tis true you find me on the point of wedding one I love beyond my life; but no argument of mine prevailed on her to elope—I scorn deceit, as much as you—By Heaven I knew not she had left her father's, till I saw her.

Ferd. What a mean excuse! You have wronged your friend then, for one, whose wanton forwardness anticipated your treachery—of this, indeed, your Jew pander informed me; but let your conduct be consistent, and since you have dared to do a wrong, follow me, and show you have a spirit to avow it.

Louisa. Antonio, I perceive his mistake—leave him to me.

Paul. Friend, you are rude, to interrupt the union of two willing hearts.

Ferd. No, meddling priest, the hand he seeks is mine.

Paul. If so, I'll proceed no further. Lady, did you ever promise this youth your hand?

[*To* LOUISA, *who shakes her Head.*

Ferd. Clara, I thank you for your silence—I would not have heard your tongue avow such falsity; be't your punishment to remember, I have not reproached you.

Enter CLARA.

Clara. What mockery is this?

Ferd. Antonio, you are protected now, but we shall meet.

[*Going,* CLARA *holds one Arm, and* LOUISA *the other.*

DUET.

Louisa. *Turn thee round, I pray thee,*
Calm awhile thy rage.
Clara. *I must help to stay thee,*
And thy wrath assuage.

Louisa. *Couldst thou not discover*
One so dear to thee?
Clara. *Canst thou be a lover,*
And thus fly from me?

[Both unveil.

Ferd. How's this! my sister! Clara too—I'm confounded.

Louisa. 'Tis even so, good brother.

Paul. How! what impiety! Did the man want to marry his own sister?

Louisa. And arn't you ashamed of yourself, not to know your own sister?

Clara. To drive away your own mistress—

Louisa. Don't you see how jealousy blinds people?

Clara Ay, and will you ever be jealous again?

Ferd. Never—never—you, sister, I know will forgive me—but how, Clara, shall I presume——

Clara. No, no, just now you told me not to tease you—"Who do you want, good signor?" "Not you, not you." Oh, you blind wretch! but swear never to be jealous again, and I'll forgive you.

Ferd. By all—

Clara. There, that will do—you'll keep the oath just as well. [*Gives her Hand.*

Louisa. But, brother, here is one, to whom some apology is due.

Ferd. Antonio, I am ashamed to think—

Ant. Not a word of excuse, Ferdinand—I have not been in love myself without learning that a lover's anger should never be resented—but come—let us retire with this good father, and we'll explain to you the cause of this error.

GLEE AND CHORUS.

Oft does Hymen smile to hear
Wordy vows of feign'd regard;
Well he knows when they're sincere:
Never slow to give reward;
For his glory is to prove
Kind to those who wed for love. [Exeunt.

SCENE VII.

A Grand Saloon.

Enter DON JEROME, SERVANTS, *and* LOPEZ.

Jerome. Be sure now let every thing be in the best order—let all my servants have on their merriest faces —but tell them to get as little drunk as possible, till after supper. So, Lopez, where's your master? sha'n't we have him at supper?

Lopez. Indeed, I believe not, sir—he's mad, I doubt; I'm sure he has frighted me from him.

Jerome. Ay, ay, he's after some wench, I suppose? a young rake! Well, well, we'll be merry without him.

Enter a SERVANT.

Serv. Sir, here is Signor Isaac.

Enter ISAAC.

Jerome. So, my dear son-in-law—there, take my blessing and forgiveness.—But where's my daughter? where's Louisa?

Isaac. She's without, impatient for a blessing, but almost afraid to enter.

Jerome. Oh, fly and bring her in. [*Exit* ISAAC.] Poor girl, I long to see her pretty face.

Isaac. [*Without.*] Come, my charmer! my trembling angel!

Enter ISAAC *and* DUENNA; DON JEROME *runs to meet them; she kneels.*

Jerome. Come to my arms, my—[*Starts back.*] Why who the devil have we here?

Isaac. Nay, Don Jerome, you promised her forgiveness; see how the dear creature droops!

Jerome. Droops indeed! Why, gad take me, this is old Margaret—but where's my daughter, where's Louisa?

Isaac. Why, here, before your eyes—nay, don't be abashed, my sweet wife!

Jerome. Wife with a vengeance! Why, zounds, you have not married the Duenna!

Duenna. [*Kneeling.*] O dear papa! you'll not disown me, sure!

Jerome. Papa! papa! Why, zounds, your impudence is as great as your ugliness!

Isaac. Rise, my charmer, go throw your snowy arms about his neck, and convince him you are——

Duenna. Oh, sir, forgive me! [*Embraces him.*

Jerome. Help! murder!

Servants. What's the matter, sir?

Jerome. Why, here, this damned Jew has brought an old harridan to strangle me.

Isaac. Lord, it is his own daughter, and he is so hard-hearted he won't forgive her.

Enter ANTONIA *and* LOUISA; *they kneel.*

Jerome. Zounds and fury! what's here now? who sent for you, sir, and who the devil are you?

Ant. This lady's husband, sir.

Isaac. Ay, that he is, I'll be sworn; for I left them with the priest, and was to have given her away.

Jerome. You were?

Isaac. Ay; that's my honest friend, Antonio; and

that's the little girl, I told you I had hampered him with.

Jerome. Why, you are either drunk or mad—this is my daughter.

Isaac. No, no; 'tis you are both drunk and mad, I think—here's your daughter.

Jerome. Hark ye, old iniquity, will you explain all this, or not?

Duenna. Come then, Don Jerome, I will—though our habits might inform you all—look on your daughter, there, and on me.

Isaac. What's this I hear?

Duenna. The truth is, that in your passion this morning, you made a small mistake; for you turned your daughter out of doors, and locked up your humble servant.

Isaac. O lud! O lud! here's a pretty fellow, to turn his daughter out of doors, instead of an old Duenna.

Jerome. And, O lud! O lud! here's a pretty fellow, to marry an old Duenna instead of my daughter—but how came the rest about?

Duenna. I have only to add, that I remained in your daughter's place, and had the good fortune to engage the affections of my sweet husband here.

Isaac. Her husband! why, you old witch, do you think I'll be your husband now! this is a trick, a cheat, and you ought all to be ashamed of yourselves.

Ant. Hark ye, Isaac, do you dare to complain of tricking?—Don Jerome, I give you my word, this cunning Portuguese has brought all this upon himself, by endeavouring to overreach you, by getting your daughter's fortune, without making any settlement in return.

Jerome. Overreach me!

Louisa. 'Tis so, indeed, sir, and we can prove it to you.

Jerome. Why, gad take me, it must be so, or he

could never have put up with such a face as Margaret's—so, little Solomon, I wish you joy of your wife, with all my soul.

Louisa. Isaac, tricking is all fair in love—let you alone for the plot.

Ant. A cunning dog, ar'n't you? A sly little villain, heh?

Louisa. Roguish, perhaps; but keen, devilish keen.

Jerome. Yes, yes; his aunt always called him little Solomon.

Isaac. Why, the plagues of Egypt upon you all!—but do you think I'll submit to such an imposition?

Ant. Isaac, one serious word—you'd better be content as you are; for, believe me, you will find, that, in the opinion of the world, there is not a fairer subject for contempt and ridicule, than a knave become the dupe of his own art.

Isaac. I don't care—I'll not endure this—Don Jerome, 'tis you have done this—you would be so cursed positive about the beauty of her you locked up, and all the time, I told you she was as old as my mother, and as ugly as the devil.

Duenna. Why, you little insignificant reptile!

Jerome. That's right—attack him, Margaret.

Duenna. Dares such a thing as you pretend to talk of beauty?—A walking rouleau!—a body that seems to owe all its consequence to the dropsy!—a pair of eyes like two dead beetles in a wad of brown dough!—a beard like an artichoke, with dry shrivelled jaws, that would disgrace the mummy of a monkey!

Jerome. Well done, Margaret!

Duenna. But you shall know that I have a brother, who wears a sword, and if you don't do me justice——

Isaac. Fire seize your brother, and you too! I'll fly to Jerusalem, to avoid you!

Duenna. Fly where you will, I'll follow you.

Jerome. Throw your snowy arms about him, Margaret. [*Exeunt* ISAAC *and* DUENNA.]—But, Louisa, are you really married to this modest gentleman?

Louisa. Sir, in obedience to your commands, I gave him my hand within this hour.

Jerome. My commands!

Ant. Yes, sir; here is your consent, under your own hand.

Jerome. How! would you rob me of my child by a trick, a false pretence? and do you think to get her fortune by the same means? Why, 'slife, you are as great a rogue as Isaac!

Ant. No, Don Jerome; though I have profited by this paper, in gaining your daughter's hand, I scorn to obtain her fortune by deceit. There, sir. [*Gives a Letter.*] Now give her your blessing for a dower, and all the little I possess shall be settled on her in return. Had you wedded her to a prince, he could do no more.

Jerome. Why, gad take me, but you are a very extraordinary fellow! But have you the impudence to suppose no one can do a generous action but yourself? Here, Louisa, tell this proud fool of yours, that he's the only man I know that would renounce your fortune; and, by my soul, he's the only man in Spain that's worthy of it.—There, bless you both: I'm an obstinate old fellow when I'm in the wrong; but you shall now find me as steady in the right.

Enter FERDINAND *and* CLARA.

Another wonder still! why, sirrah! Ferdinand, you have not stole a nun, have you?

Ferd. She is a nun in nothing but her habit, sir—look nearer, and you will perceive 'tis Clara D'Almanza, Don Guzman's daughter; and, with pardon for stealing a wedding, she is also my wife.

Jerome. Gadsbud, and a great fortune.—Ferdinand, you are a prudent young rogue, and I forgive you; and, ifecks, you are a pretty little damsel. Give your father-in-law a kiss, you smiling rogue.

Clara. There, old gentleman; and now mind you behave well to us.

Jerome. Ifecks, those lips ha'n't been chilled by kissing beads—'Egad, I believe I shall grow the best humoured fellow in Spain—Lewis! Sancho! Carlos! d'ye hear? are all my doors thrown open? Our children's weddings are the only holidays our age can boast; and then we drain, with pleasure, the little stock of spirits time has left us. [*Music within.*] But see, here come our friends and neighbours!

Enter MASQUERADERS.

And, 'ifaith, we'll make a night on't with wine, and dance, and catches—then old and young shall join us.

FINALE.

Jerome. *Come now for jest and smiling,*
Both old and young beguiling,
Let us laugh and play, so blythe and gay,
Till we banish care away.

Louisa. *Thus crown'd with dance and song,*
The hours shall glide along,
With a heart at ease, merry, merry glees,
Can never fail to please.

Ferd. *Each bride with blushes glowing,*
Our wine as rosy flowing,
Let us laugh and play, so blythe and gay,
Till we banish care away.

Ant. *Then healths to every friend,*
The night's repast shall end,
With a heart at ease, merry, merry glees,
Can never fail to please.

Clara. *Nor, while we are so joyous,*
Shall anxious fear annoy us,
Let us laugh and play, so blythe and gay,
Till we banish care away.

Jerome. *For generous guests like these,*
Accept the wish to please,
So we'll laugh and play, so blythe and gay,
Your smiles drive care away.

[Exeunt.

THE END.

BELLES STRATAGEM.



Drawn by H. Corbould. Published by Longman & C.° 1808. Engraved by C. Heath.

THE

BELLE'S STRATAGEM;

A COMEDY,

IN FIVE ACTS;

BY MRS COWLEY.

AS PERFORMED AT THE THEATRES ROYAL,

DRURY LANE AND COVENT GARDEN.

PRINTED UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF THE MANAGERS

FROM THE PROMPT-BOOK.

WITH REMARKS

BY MRS INCHBALD.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR LONGMAN, HURST, REES, ORME, AND BROWN,

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EDINBURGH:
Printed by James Ballantyne & Co.

REMARKS.

THIS comedy appeared on the stage in 1780.; it was extremely attractive for two seasons, and still holds a place in the catalogue of those plays which are generally performed every year.

Its greatest charm is, that it is humorous, without ever descending to that source of humour, easy of access, and which is placed among characters in low life.

The persons of importance in this drama are all elegant, or, at least, well-bred; and while they excite mirth, they create also an interest in their behalf, which is assisted to the end of the piece by a variety of forcible and pleasing occurrences.

The incident, from which the play takes its title, is, perhaps the least pleasing, and the least probable, of any amongst the whole; still, this stratagem, as the foundation of a multiplicity of others, far better conceived and executed, has a claim to the toleration of the reader, and will generally obtain admiration from the auditor, by the skill of the actress who imitates a simpleton.

The dialogue of this play is very good; abounding

in excellent satire, with a most perfect description of the modes and manners of the fashionable world.

If Doricourt should remind the reader of Sir Harry Wildair, or Valentine in "Love for Love," it is the only character in the work that does not appear original—Sir George and Lady Frances Touchwood are more particularly new than the rest.

The second plot, in which they are the principals, is, to many spectators and readers, much more interesting than the first. It is assuredly more refined and more natural, though neither so bold nor so brilliant.

The love of Sir George and his wife is fervent, yet reasonable; they are fond, but not foolish; and with all their extreme delicacy of opinions, never once express their thoughts, either in ranting, affected, or insipid sentences.

Lady Frances, being protected at the masquerade, delights some auditors, as much as Doricourt's falling violently in love there: and though neither of these events, traced through all their meanders, may appear strictly within the bounds of likelihood, yet dramatic probability is seldom for a moment lost; which is the happy art of alluring the attention of an audience, from the observation of every defect, and of fixing it solely upon every beauty which the dramatist displays.

To explain this remark—who does not scorn that romantic passion, which is inflamed to the highest ardour, by a few hours conversation with a woman whose face is concealed? And yet, who does not

here sympathize with the lover, and feel a strong agitation, when Letitia, going to take off her mask, exclaims in a tremulous voice,—"This is the most awful moment of my life!"

"The Belle's Stratagem" certainly classes amongst modern plays; and yet the mention of powder worn by the ladies, their silk gowns, and other long-exploded fashions, together with the hero's having in Paris "danced with the Queen of France at a masquerade," gives a certain sensation to the reader, which seems to place the work on the honourable list of ancient dramas.

But the period of the last twenty-six years, which has produced in the world more wonderful changes in fashions, manners, opinions, and characters, than many a century had done before, has yet preserved one illustrious character, named in this play, free from alteration;—and, at the present moment, her eulogium is heard in the midst of crowded theatres, with all that glow of veneration and love, which heretofore it inspired; and which now, more than ever, becomes due to those virtues—which time has proved to be stedfast.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

	DRURY-LANE.	COVENT-GARDEN.
DORICOURT	*Mr Elliston.*	*Mr Lewis.*
HARDY	*Mr Dowton.*	*Mr Munden.*
SIR GEO. TOUCHWOOD	*Mr H. Siddons.*	*Mr Murray.*
FLUTTER	*Mr Palmer.*	*Mr Fawcett.*
SAVILLE	*Mr Powell.*	*Mr C. Kemble.*
VILLERS	*Mr Bartley.*	*Mr Claremont.*
COURTALL	*Mr Holland.*	*Mr Farley.*
SILVERTONGUE	*Mr Maddocks.*	*Mr Simmons.*
TOM FOOL	*Mr Chatterley.*	
GENTLEMEN		
DICK	*Mr Purser.*	
GIBSON	*Mr Evans.*	*Mr Atkins.*
SERVANT	*Mr Rhodes.*	
LETITIA HARDY	*Miss Duncan.*	*Miss Smith.*
MRS RACKETT	*Mrs Dormer.*	*Mrs Glover.*
LADY TOUCHWOOD	*Miss Mellon.*	*Miss Brunton.*
MISS OGLE	*Miss Boyce.*	*Miss Waddy.*
KITTY WILLIS	*Mrs Scott.*	*Miss Cox.*

SCENE,—London.

THE

BELLE'S STRATAGEM.

ACT THE FIRST.

SCENE I.

Lincoln's Inn.

Enter SAVILLE, *followed by a* SERVANT, *at the Top of the Stage, looking round, as if at a Loss.*

Sav. Lincoln's Inn!—Well, but where to find him, now I am in Lincoln's Inn?—Where did he say his master was?

Serv. He only said in Lincoln's Inn, sir.

Sav. That's pretty!—And your wisdom never enquired at whose chambers?

Serv. Sir, you spoke to the servant yourself.

Sav. If I was too impatient to ask questions, you ought to have taken directions, blockhead!

Enter COURTALL, *singing.*

Ha, Courtall!—Bid him keep the horses in motion, and then enquire at all the chambers round. [*Exit* SERVANT.] What the devil brings you to this part

of the town?—Have any of the long robes handsome wives, sisters, or chambermaids?

Court. Perhaps they have;—but I came on a different errand; and had thy good fortune brought thee here half an hour sooner, I'd have given thee such a treat! ha! ha! ha!

Sav. I'm sorry I missed it—What was it?

Court. I was informed, a few days since, that my cousins Fallow were come to town, and desired earnestly to see me at their lodgings, in Warwick Court, Holborn. Away drove I, painting them all the way as so many Hebes. They came from the furthest part of Northumberland, had never been in town, and, in course, were made up of rusticity, innocence, and beauty.

Sav. Well!—

Court. After waiting thirty minutes, during which there was a violent bustle, in bounced five sallow damsels, four of them maypoles;—the fifth, Nature, by way of variety, had bent in the Æsop style—but they all opened at once, like hounds on a fresh scent —"Oh, cousin Courtall!—How do you do, cousin Courtall?—Lord, cousin, I am glad you are come! We want you to go with us to the Park, and the plays, and the opera, and Almack's, and all the fine places!"——The devil, thought I, my dears, may attend you, for I am sure I won't.—However, I heroically stayed an hour with them, and discovered the virgins were all come to town, with the hopes of leaving it—wives;—their heads full of knight-baronets, fops, and adventures.

Sav. Well, how did you get off?

Court. Oh, pleaded a million engagements.—However, conscience twitch'd me, so I breakfasted with them this morning, and afterwards 'squired them to the gardens here, as the most private place in town; and then took a sorrowful leave, complaining of my

hard, hard fortune, that obliged me to set off immediately for Dorsetshire—Ha! ha! ha!

Sav. I congratulate your escape—Courtall at Almack's, with five awkward country cousins!—Ha! ha! ha!—Why your existence, as a man of gallantry, could never have survived it.

Court. Death and fire! had they come to town, like the rustics of the last age, to see Paul's, the lions, and the wax-work—at their service; but the cousins of our days come up ladies—and, with the knowledge they glean from magazines, and pocket-books, fine ladies;—laugh at the bashfulness of their grandmothers, and boldly demand their *entrées* into the first circles.

Sav. Come, give me some news.—I have been at war with woodcocks and partridges these two months, and am a stranger to all that has passed out of their region.

Court. Oh, enough for three gazettes!—the ladies are going to petition for a bill, that, during the war, every man may be allowed two wives.

Sav. 'Tis impossible they should succeed, for the majority of both houses know what it is to have one.

Court. But, pr'ythee, Saville, how came you to town, whilst all the qualified gentry are playing at pop-gun on Coxheath, and the country over-run with hares and foxes?

Sav. I came to meet my friend Doricourt, who, you know, is lately arrived from Rome.

Court. Arrived! yes, 'faith, and has cut us all out!—his carriage, his liveries, his dress, himself, are the rage of the day! his first appearance set the whole *ton* in a ferment, and his valet is besieged by *levées* of tailors, habit-makers, and other ministers of fashion, to gratify the impatience of their customers, for becoming *à la mode de Doricourt*—Nay, the beautiful Lady Frolic, t'other night, with two sister countesses, insisted upon his waistcoat for muffs; and

their snowy arms now bear it in triumph about town, to the heart-rending affliction of all our *beaux garçons!*

Sav. Indeed! Well, those little gallantries will soon be over;—he's on the point of marriage.

Court. Marriage! Doricourt on the point of marriage! 'tis the happiest tidings you could have given, next to his being hang'd.—Who is the bride elect?

Sav. I never saw her; but 'tis Miss Hardy, the rich heiress.—The match was made by the parents, and the courtship began on their nurses' knees; master used to crow at miss, and miss used to chuckle at master.

Court. Oh, then by this time, they care no more for each other, than I do for my country cousins.

Sav. I don't know that; they have never met since thus high; and so, probably, have some regard for each other.

Court. Never met!—Odd!

Sav. A whim of Mr Hardy's; he thought his daughter's charms would make a more forcible impression, if her lover remained in ignorance of them, till his return from the continent.

Enter SAVILLE'S SERVANT.

Serv. Mr Doricourt, sir, has been at Counsellor Pleadwell's, and gone about five minutes.

[*Exit* SERVANT.

Sav. Five minutes—Zounds! I have been five minutes too late all my lifetime!——Good morrow, Courtall—I must pursue him. [*Going.*

Court. Promise to dine with me to-day;—I have some honest fellows. [*Going off on the opposite Side.*

Sav. Can't promise—perhaps I may.——See there, there's a bevy of female Patagonians, coming down upon us.

Court. By the lord, then, it must be my strapping cousins—I dare not look behind me—Run, man, run!

[*Exit on the same Side.*

SCENE II.

A Hall at DORICOURT'S. (*A gentle Knock at the Door.*)

Enter the PORTER.

Port. Tap! what sneaking devil art thou? [*Opens the Door.*]

Enter CROWQUILL.

So! I suppose you are one of Monsieur's customers too? He's above stairs now, overhauling all his honour's things to a parcel of 'em.

Crowq. No, sir; it is with you, if you please, that I want to speak.

Port. Me! well, what do you want with me?

Crowq. Sir, you must know that I am—I am the gentleman who writes the *tête-a-têtes* in the magazines.

Port Oh, ho!—what, you are the fellow that ties folks together, in your sixpenny cuts, that never meet any where else?

Crowq. Oh, dear sir, excuse me!—we always go on *foundation*; and if you can help me to a few anecdotes of your master, such as what marchioness he lost money to in Paris—who is his favourite lady in town—or the name of the girl he first made love to at college, or any incidents that happened to his grandmother, or great aunts—a couple will do, by way of supporters—I'll weave a web of intrigues, losses, and gallantries, between them, that shall fill four pages, procure me a dozen dinners, and you, sir, a bottle of wine for your trouble.

Port. Oh, ho! I heard the butler talk of you, when I lived at Lord Trinket's. But what the devil

do you mean by a bottle of wine!—You gave him a crown for a retaining fee.

Crowq. Oh, sir, that was for a lord's amours; a commoner's are never but half. Why, I have had a baronet's for five shillings, though he was a married man, and changed his mistress every six weeks.

Port. Don't tell me!—What signifies a baronet, or a bit of a lord, who, may be, was never further than sun and sun round London? *We* have travelled, man! My master has been in Italy, and over the whole island of Spain; talked to the Queen of France, and danced with her at a masquerade. Ay, and such folks don't go to masquerades for nothing;—but mum—not a word more.—Unless you'll rank my master with a lord, I'll not be guilty of blabbing his secrets, I assure you.

Crowq. Well, sir, perhaps you'll throw in a hint or two of other families where you've lived, that may be work'd up into something; and so, sir, here is one, two, three, four, five shillings.

Port. Well, that's honest. [*Pocketing the money.*] To tell you the truth, I don't know much of my master's concerns yet;—but here comes monsieur and his gang: I'll pump them: they have trotted after him all round Europe, from the Canaries to the Isle of Wight.

Enter several foreign SERVANTS, *and Two* TRADESMEN.

[*The* PORTER *takes one of them aside.*]

Trades. Well then, you have show'd us all?

French. All, *en vérité, messieurs!* you *avez* seen every ting.—*Serviteur—serviteur*—[*Exeunt* TRADESMEN.] Ah, here comes one *autre* curious Englishman, and dat's one *autre* guinea *pour moi.*

Enter SAVILLE.

Allons, monsieur, dis way; I will show you tings, such tings, you never see, begar, in England!—Velvets by Le Mosse—suits cut by Verdue—trimmings by Grossette—embroidery by Detanville——

Sav. Puppy! where is your master?

Port. Zounds! you chattering frog-eating dunderhead, can't you see a gentleman?—'Tis Mr Saville.

French. Monsieur Saville! *Je suis mort de peur.*—Ten tousand pardons! *Excusez mon erreur,* and permit me you conduct to Monsieur Doricourt; he be too happy *à vous voir.*

[*Exeunt* FRENCHMAN *and* SAVILLE.

Port. Step below a bit:—we'll make it out somehow!—I suppose a slice of sirloin won't make the story go down the worse.

[*Exeunt* PORTER *and* CROWQUILL.

SCENE III.

An Apartment at DORICOURT'S.

Enter DORICOURT.

Doric. [*Speaking to a* SERVANT *behind.*] I shall be too late for St James's; bid him come immediately.

Enter FRENCHMAN *and* SAVILLE.

French. Monsieur Saville. [*Exit* FRENCHMAN.

Doric. Most fortunate!—My dear Saville, let the warmth of this embrace speak the pleasure of my heart.

Sav. Well, this is some comfort, after the scurvy reception I met with in your hall.—I prepared my

mind, as I came up stairs, for a *bon jour*, a grimace, and an *adieu*.

Doric. Why so?

Sav. Judging of the master, from the rest of the family.—What the devil is the meaning of that flock of foreigners below, with their parchment faces, and snuffy whiskers?—What! can't an Englishman stand behind your carriage, buckle your shoe, or brush your coat?

Doric. Stale, my dear Saville, stale—Englishmen make the best soldiers, citizens, artizans, and philosophers in the world; but the very worst footmen. I keep French fellows and Germans, as the Romans kept slaves, because their own countrymen had minds too enlarged and haughty to descend with a grace to the duties of such a station.

Sav. A good excuse for a bad practice.

Doric. On my honour, experience will convince you of its truth. A Frenchman neither hears, sees, nor breathes, but as his master directs; and his whole system of conduct is comprized in one short word, *Obedience!* An Englishman reasons, forms opinions, cogitates and disputes. *He* is the mere creature of your will: the other, a being conscious of equal importance in the universal scale with yourself, and is therefore your judge, whilst he wears your livery, and decides on your actions with the freedom of a censor.

Sav. And this in defence of a custom I have heard you execrate, together with all the adventitious manners imported by our travell'd gentry.

Doric. Ay, but that was at eighteen; we are always *very* wise at eighteen. But consider this point: we go into Italy, where the sole business of the people is to study and improve the powers of music: we yield to the fascination, and grow enthusiasts in the charming science; we travel over France, and see the whole kingdom composing ornaments, and

inventing fashions: we condescend to avail ourselves of their industry, and adopt their modes: we return to England, and find the nation intent on the most important objects; polity, commerce, war, with all the liberal arts, employ her sons; the latent sparks glow afresh within our bosoms; the sweet follies of the continent imperceptibly slide away, whilst senators, statesmen, patriots, and heroes, emerge from the *virtù* of Italy and the frippery of France.

Sav. I may as well give it up—You had always the art of placing your faults in the best light; and I can't help loving you, faults and all: so to start a subject which must please you—When do you expect Miss Hardy?

Doric. Oh, the hour of expectation is past—she is arrived, and I this morning had the honour of an interview at Pleadwell's. The writings were ready: and, in obedience to the will of Mr Hardy, we met to sign and seal.

Sav. Has the event answered? Did your heart leap or sink when you beheld your mistress?

Doric. Faith, neither one nor t'other:—she's a fine girl, as far as mere flesh and blood goes.—But—

Sav. But what?

Doric. Why, she's *only* a fine girl;—complexion, shape, and features—nothing more.

Sav. Is not that enough?

Doric. No—she should have spirit; fire! *l'air enjoué!* that something, that nothing, which every body feels, and which nobody can describe, in the resistless charmers of Italy and France.

Sav. Thanks to the parsimony of my father, that kept me from travel! I would not have lost my relish for true unaffected English beauty, to have been quarrelled for by all the belles of Versailles and Florence.

Doric. Pho! thou hast no taste!—English beauty! 'tis insipidity: it wants the zest, it wants poignancy,

Frank! Why, I have known a Frenchwoman, indebted to nature for no one thing, but a pair of decent eyes, reckon in her suite as many counts, marquisses, and *petits maitres*, as would satisfy three dozen of our first-rate toasts. I have known an Italian *Marquizina* make ten conquests in stepping from her carriage; and carry her slaves from one city to another, whose real intrinsic beauty would have yielded to half the little *grisettes* that pace your Mall on a Sunday.

Sav. And has Miss Hardy nothing of this?

Doric. If she has, she was pleased to keep it to herself. I was in the room half an hour, before I could catch the colour of her eyes; and every attempt to draw her into conversation occasioned so cruel an embarrassment, that I was reduced to the necessity of news, French fleets, and Spanish captures, with her father.

Sav. So, Miss Hardy, with only beauty, modesty, and merit, is doomed to the arms of a husband who will despise her.

Doric. You are unjust—Though she has not inspired me with violent passion, my honour secures her felicity.

Sav. Come, come, Doricourt, you know very well, that when the honour of a husband is *locum-tenens* for his heart, his wife must be as indifferent as himself, if she is not unhappy.

Doric. Pho! never moralize without spectacles.—But, as we are upon the tender subject, how did you bear Touchwood's carrying Lady Frances?

Sav. You know I never looked up to her with hope; and Sir George is every way worthy of her.

Doric. *A la mode Angloise*, a philosopher even in love!

Sav. Come, I detain you—you seem dressed at all points, and of course have an engagement.

Doric. To St. James's—I dine at Hardy's, and

accompany them to the masquerade in the evening—but breakfast with me to-morrow, and we'll talk of our old companions—for I swear to you, Saville, the air of the continent has not effaced one youthful prejudice or attachment.

Sav. With an exception in the case of ladies and servants.

Doric. True; there I plead guilty;—but I have never yet found any man, whom I could cordially take to my heart, and call friend, who was not born beneath a British sky, and whose heart and manners were not truly English.

[*Exeunt* DORICOURT *and* SAVILLE.

SCENE IV.

An Apartment at MR HARDY'S.

VILLERS *seated on a Sofa, reading.*

Enter FLUTTER.

Flut. Ha, Villers, have you seen Mrs Rackett?—Miss Hardy, I find, is out.

Vill. I have not seen her yet. I have made a voyage to Lapland since I came in. [*Flinging away the Book.*] A lady at her toilette is as difficult to be moved as a Quaker. [*Yawning.*] What events have happened in the world since yesterday? have you heard?

Flut. Oh, yes; I stopped at Tattersall's as I came by, and there I found Lord James Jessamy, Sir William Wilding, and Mr———. But, now I think on't, you sha'n't know a syllable of the matter; for I have been informed you never believe above one half of what I say.

Vill. My dear fellow, somebody has imposed upon

you most egregiously! Half! Why, I never believe one-tenth part of what you say: that is, acording to the plain and literal expression: but, as I understand you, your intelligence is amusing.

Flut. That's very hard now, very hard. I never related a falsity in my life, unless I stumbled at it by mistake; and if it were otherwise, your dull matter-of-fact people are infinitely obliged to those warm imaginations, which soar into fiction to amuse you; for, positively, the common events of this little dirty world are not worth talking about, unless you embellish 'em!——Ha! here comes Mrs Rackett: Adieu to weeds, I see! All life!

Enter MRS RACKETT.

Enter, madam, in all your charms! Villers has been abusing your toilette for keeping you so long; but I think we are much obliged to it, and so are you.

Mrs R. How so, pray? Good-morning t'ye both. Here, here's a hand a-piece for you.

[*They kiss her Hands.*

Flut. How so! Because it has given you so many beauties.

Mrs R. Delightful compliment! What do you think of that, Villers?

Vill. That he and his compliments are alike—showy, but won't bear examining.——So you brought Miss Hardy to town last night?

Mrs R. Yes, I should have brought her before, but I had a fall from my horse, that confined me a week. I suppose in her heart she wished me hanged a dozen times an hour.

Flut. Why?

Mrs R. Had she not an expecting lover in town all the time? She meets him this morning at the lawyer's—I hope she'll charm him; she's the sweetest girl in the world.

Vill. Vanity, like murder, will out.—You have convinced me you think yourself more charming.

Mrs R. How can that be?

Vill. No woman ever praises another, unless she thinks herself superior in the very perfections she allows.

Flut. Nor no man ever rails at the sex, unless he is conscious he deserves their hatred.

Mrs R. Thank ye, Flutter—I'll owe ye a *bouruet* for that. I am going to visit the new-married Lady Frances Touchwood—Who knows her husband?

Flut. Every body.

Mrs R. Is there not something odd in his character?

Vill. Nothing, but that he is passionately fond of his wife;—and so petulant is his love, that he opened the cage of a favourite bullfinch, and sent it to catch butterflies, because she rewarded its song with her kisses.

Mrs R. Intolerable monster! Such a brute deserves——

Vill. Nay, nay, nay, nay, this is your sex now—— Give a woman but one stroke of character, off she goes like a ball from a racket; sees the whole man, marks him down for an angel or a devil, and so exhibits him to her acquaintance.—This monster! this brute! is one of the worthiest fellows upon earth; sound sense and a liberal mind; but dotes on his wife to such excess, that he quarrels with every thing she admires, and is jealous of her tippet and nosegay.

Mrs R. Oh, less love for me, kind Cupid! I can see no difference between the torment of such an affection and hatred.

Flut. Oh, pardon me, inconceivable difference, inconceivable; I see it as clearly as your bracelet. In the one case the husband would say, as Mr Snapper said t'other day, Zounds! madam, do you suppose

that *my* table, and *my* house, and *my* pictures!—*Apropos, des Bottes:*—There was the divinest Plague of Athens sold yesterday at Langford's; the dead figures so natural, you would have sworn they had been alive. Lord Primrose bid five hundred—Six, said Lady Carmine—A thousand, said Ingot the Nabob.—Down went the hammer.—A *rouleau* for your bargain, said Sir Jeremy Jingle. And what answer do you think Ingot made him?

Mrs R. Why took the offer.

Flut. Sir, I would oblige you, but I buy this picture to place in the nursery: the children have already got Whittington and his Cat: 'tis just this size, and they'll make good companions.

Mrs R. Ha! ha! ha! Well, I protest that's just the way now—the Nabobs and their wives outbid one at every sale, and the creatures have no more taste—

Vill. There again! You forget this story is told by Flutter, who always remembers every thing but the circumstances and the person he talks about;—'twas Ingot who offered a *rouleau* for the bargain, and Sir Jeremy Jingle who made the reply.

Flut. Egad, I believe you are right——Well, the story is as good one way as t'other, you know. Good morning. I am going to Mrs Crotchet's concert, and in my way back shall make my bow at Sir George's. [*Going.*

Vill. I'll venture every figure in your tailor's bill, you make some blunder there.

Flut. [*Turning back.*] Done; my tailor's bill has not been paid these two years; and I'll open my mouth with as much care as Mrs Bridget Button, who wears cork plumpers in each cheek, and never hazards more than six words, for fear of shewing them. [*Exit* FLUTTER.

Mrs R. 'Tis a goodnatured, insignificant creature! let in every where, and cared for no where.—There's

Miss Hardy returned from Lincoln's Inn:—she seems rather chagrined.

Vill. Then I leave you to your communications.

Enter LETITIA, *followed by her* MAID.

Adieu! I am rejoiced to see you so well, madam! but I must tear myself away.

Letit. Don't vanish in a moment.

Vill. Oh, inhuman! you are two of the most dangerous women in town.—Staying here to be cannonaded by four such eyes, is equal to a *rencontre* with Paul Jones, or a midnight march to Omoa!—They'll swallow the nonsense, for the sake of the compliment. [*Aside.—Exit* VILLERS.

Letit. [*Gives her Cloak to her* MAID.] Order Du Quesne never more to come again; he shall positively dress my hair no more. [*Exit* MAID.] And this odious silk, how unbecoming it is!—I was bewitched to chuse it. [*Throwing herself on a Chair, and looking in a Pocket Glass,* MRS RACKETT *staring at her.*] Did you ever see such a fright as I am to-day?

Mrs R. Yes, I have seen you look much worse.

Letit. How can you be so provoking? If I do not look this morning worse than ever I looked in my life, I am naturally a fright. You shall have it which way you will.

Mrs R. Just as you please; but pray what is the meaning of all this?

Letit. [*Rising.*] Men are all dissemblers, flatterers, deceivers! Have I not heard a thousand times of my air, my eyes, my shape—all made for victory! and to-day, when I bent my whole heart on one poor conquest, I have proved that all those imputed charms amount to nothing;—for Doricourt saw them unmoved.—A husband of fifteen months could not have examined me with more cutting indifference.

Mrs R. Then do you return it like a wife of fifteen months, and be as indifferent as he.

Letit. Ay, there's the sting! The blooming boy who left his image in my young heart, is at four and twenty improved in every grace that fixed him there. It is the same face that my memory, and my dreams, constantly painted to me; but its graces are finished, and every beauty heightened. How mortifying, to feel myself at the same moment his slave, and an object of perfect indifference to him!

Mrs R. How are you certain that was the case? Did you expect him to kneel down before the lawyer, his clerks, and your father, to make oath of your beauty?

Letit. No; but he should have looked as if a sudden ray had pierced him! he should have been breathless! speechless! for, oh! Caroline, all this was I!

Mrs R. I am sorry you was such a fool. Can you expect a man, who has courted and been courted by half the fine women in Europe, to feel like a girl from a boarding-school? He is the prettiest fellow you have seen, and in course bewilders your imagination; but he has seen a million of pretty women, child, before he saw you; and his first feelings have been over long ago.

Letit. Your raillery distresses me; but I will touch his heart, or never be his wife.

Mrs R. Absurd and romantic! If you have no reason to believe his heart pre-engaged, be satisfied; if he is a man of honour, you'll have nothing to complain of.

Letit. Nothing to complain of! Heavens! shall I marry the man I adore, with such an expectation as that?

Mrs R. And when you have fretted yourself pale, my dear, you'll have mended your expectation greatly.

Letit. [*Pausing.*] Yet I have one hope. If there is any power whose peculiar care is faithful love, that power I invoke to aid me.

Enter MR HARDY.

Hardy. Well, now; wasn't I right? Aye, Letty! Aye, Cousin Rackett! wasn't I right? I knew 'twould be so. He was all agog to see her before he went abroad; and, if he had, he'd have thought no more of her face, may be, than his own.

Mrs R. May be not half so much.

Hardy. Ay, may be so,—but I see into things; exactly as I foresaw, to-day he fell desperately in love with the wench, he! he! he!

Letit. Indeed, sir! how did you perceive it?

Hardy. That's a pretty question! How do I perceive every thing? How did I foresee the fall of corn, and the rise of taxes? How did I know, that if we quarrelled with America, Norway deals would be dearer? How did I foretel that a war would sink the funds? How did I forewarn Parson Homily, that if he didn't some way or other contrive to get more votes than Rubric, he'd lose the lectureship? How did I ——But what the devil makes you so dull, Letitia? I thought to have found you popping about, as brisk as the jacks of your harpsichord.

Letit. Surely, sir, 'tis a very serious occasion.

Hardy. Pho, pho! girls should never be grave before marriage. How did you feel, cousin, beforehand? Eh?

Mrs R. Feel! why exceeding full of cares.

Hardy. Did you?

Mrs R. I could not sleep, for thinking of my coach, my liveries, and my chairmen; the taste of clothes I should be presented in distracted me for a week; and whether I should be married in white or lilac gave me the most cruel anxiety.

Letit. And is it possible that you felt no other care?

Hardy. And pray, of what sort may your cares be,

Mrs Letitia? I begin to foresee now that you have taken a dislike to Doricourt.

Letit. Indeed, sir, I have not.

Hardy. Then what's all this melancholy about? A'n't you agoing to be married? and what's more, to a sensible man? and, what's more to a young girl, to a handsome man? And what's all this melancholy for, I say?

Mrs. R. Why because he is handsome and sensible, and because she's over head and ears in love with him; all which, it seems, your foreknowledge had not told you a word of.

Letit. Fie, Caroline!

Hardy. Well, come, do you tell me what's the matter then. If you don't like him, hang the signing and sealing, he sha'n't have ye:—and yet I can't say that neither; for you know that estate, that cost his father and me upwards of fourscore thousand pounds, must go all to him, if you won't have him: if he won't have you, indeed, 'twill be all yours. All that's clear; engrossed upon parchment, and the poor dear man set his hand to it whilst he was dying.—"Ah!" said I, "I foresee you'll never live to see 'em come together; but their first son shall be christened Jeremiah, after you, that I promise you."——But come, I say, what is the matter? Don't you like him?

Letit. I fear, sir—If I must speak—I fear I was less agreeable in Mr Doricourt's eyes than he appeared in mine.

Hardy. There you are mistaken; for I asked him, and he told me he liked you vastly. Don't you think he must have taken a fancy to her?

Mrs R. Why really I think so, as I was not by.

Letit. My dear sir, I am convinced he has not; but if there is spirit or invention in woman, he shall.

Hardy. Right, girl; go to your toilette——

Letit. It is not my toilette that can serve me: but

a plan has struck me, if you will not oppose it, which flatters me with brilliant success.

Hardy. Oppose it! Not I indeed! What is it?

Letit. Why, sir—it may seem a little paradoxical; but, as he does not like me enough, I want him to like me still less, and will at our next interview endeavour to heighten his indifference into dislike.

Hardy. Who the devil could have foreseen that?

Mrs R. Heaven and earth! Letitia, are you serious?

Letit. As serious as the most important business of my life demands.

Mrs R. Why endeavour to make him dislike you?

Letit. Because 'tis much easier to convert a sentiment into its opposite, than to transform indifference into tender passion.

Mrs R. That may be good philosophy, but I am afraid you'll find it a bad maxim.

Letit. I have the strongest confidence in it. I am inspired with unusual spirits, and on this hazard willingly stake my chance for happiness. I am impatient to begin my measures. [*Exit* LETITIA.

Hardy. Can you foresee the end of this, cousin?

Mrs R. No, sir; nothing less than your penetration can do that, I am sure; and I can't stay now, to consider it. I am going to call on the Ogles, and then to Lady Frances Touchwood's, and then to an auction, and then—I don't know where—but I shall be at home time enough to witness this extraordinary interview. Good-b'ye. [*Exit* MRS RACKETT.

Hardy. Well, 'tis an odd thing—I can't understand it—but I foresee Letty will have her way, and so I sha'n't give myself the trouble to dispute it.

[*Exit* HARDY.

ACT THE SECOND.

SCENE I.

SIR GEORGE TOUCHWOOD'S.

Enter DORICOURT *and* SIR GEORGE.

Doric. Married, ha! ha! ha! you, whom I heard in Paris say such things of the sex, are in London a married man!

Sir G. The sex is still what it has ever been since *la petite morale* banished substantial virtues; and rather than have given my name to one of your high-bred fashionable dames, I'd have crossed the Line in a fireship, and married a Japanese.

Doric. Yet you have married an English beauty; yea, and a beauty born in high life.

Sir G. True; but she has a simplicity of heart and manners, that would have become the fair Hebrew damsels toasted by the patriarchs.

Doric. Ha! ha! Why, thou art a downright matrimonial Quixote. My life on't she becomes as mere a town lady in six months, as though she had been bred to the trade.

Sir G. Common—common—[*Contemptuously.*] No, sir, Lady Frances despises high life so much from the ideas I have given her, that she'll live in it like a salamander in fire.

Doric. Oh, that the circle *dans la place Victoire* could witness thy extravagance! I'll send thee off to St Evreux this night, drawn at full length, and coloured after nature.

Sir G. Tell him, then, to add to the ridicule, that

Touchwood glories in the name of husband; that he has found in one Englishwoman more beauty than Frenchmen ever saw, and more goodness than Frenchwomen can conceive.

Doric. Well, enough of description. Introduce me to this phœnix; I came on purpose.

Sir G. Introduce!—oh, ay, to be sure!—I believe Lady Frances is engaged just now—but another time. —How handsome the dog looks to-day! [*Aside.*

Doric. Another time!—but I have no other time. —'Sdeath! this is the only hour I can command this fortnight.

Sir G. [*Aside.*] I am glad to hear it, with all my soul!—So then, you can't dine with us to-day? That's very unlucky.

Doric. Oh, yes—as to dinner—yes, I can, I believe, contrive to dine with you to-day.

Sir G. Pshaw! I didn't think on what I was saying; I meant supper.—You can't sup with us?

Doric. Why, supper will be rather more convenient than dinner.—But you are fortunate—if you had asked me any other night, I could not have come.

Sir G. To-night!—Gad, now I recollect, we are particularly engaged to-night.——But to-morrow night——

Doric. Why, look ye, Sir George, 'tis very plain you have no inclination to let me see your wife at all; so here I sit. [*Throws himself on a Sofa.*]—There's my hat, and here are my legs—Now I sha'n't stir till I have seen her; and I have no engagements: I'll breakfast, dine, and sup with you, every day this week.

Sir G. Was there ever such a provoking wretch!—But, to be plain with you, Doricourt, I and my house are at your service: but you are a damned agreeable fellow; and ten years younger than I am: and the women, I observe, always simper when you appear. For these reasons, I had rather, when Lady Frances

and I are together, that you should forget we are acquainted, further than a nod, a smile, or a how d'ye.

Doric. Very well.

Sir G. It is not merely yourself, *in propria persona*, that I object to; but if you are intimate here, you'll make my house still more the fashion than it is; and it is already so much so, that my doors are of no use to me. I married Lady Frances, to engross her to myself; yet such is the blessed freedom of modern manners, that in spite of me, her eyes, thoughts, and conversation, are continually divided amongst all the flirts and coxcombs of fashion.

Doric. To be sure, I confess that kind of freedom is carried rather too far. 'Tis hard one can't have a jewel in one's cabinet, but the whole town must be gratified with its lustre.——He sha'n't preach me out of seeing his wife, though. [*Aside.*

Sir G. Well, now that's reasonable. When you take time to reflect, Doricourt, I always observe you decide right; and therefore I hope—

Enter a SERVANT.

Serv. Sir, my lady desires——

Sir G. I am particularly engaged.

Doric. Oh, lord, that shall be no excuse in the world. [*Leaping from the Sofa.*] Lead the way, John. —I'll attend your lady.

[*Exit, following the* SERVANT.

Sir G. What devil possessed me to talk about her! ——Here, Doricourt! [*Running after him.*] Doricourt!

Enter MRS RACKETT *and* MISS OGLE, *followed by a* SERVANT.

Mrs R. Acquaint your lady, that Mrs Rackett and Miss Ogle are here. [*Exit* SERVANT.

Miss O. I shall hardly know Lady Frances, 'tis so long since I was in Shropshire.

Mrs R. And I'll be sworn, you never saw her out of Shropshire.—Her father kept her locked up with his caterpillars and shells; and loved her beyond any thing—but a blue butterfly, and a petrified frog!

Miss O. Ha! ha! ha!—Well, 'twas a cheap way of breeding her:—you know, he was very poor, though a lord; and very high-spirited, though a virtuoso.—In town, her pantheons, operas, and robes de cour, would have swallowed his sea-weeds, moths, and monsters, in six weeks!——Sir George, I find, thinks his wife a most extraordinary creature: he has taught her to despise every thing like fashionable life, and boasts that example will have no effect on her.

Mrs R. There's a great degree of impertinence in all that.—I'll try to make her a fine lady, to humble him.

Miss O. That's just the thing I wish.

Enter LADY FRANCES.

Lady F. I beg ten thousand pardons, my dear Mrs Rackett.—Miss Ogle, I rejoice to see you: I should have come to you sooner, but I was detained in conversation by Mr Doricourt.

Mrs R. Pray, make no apology; I am quite happy that we have your ladyship in town at last.—What stay do you make?

Lady F. A short one! Sir George talks with regret of the scenes we have left; and, as the ceremony of presentation is over, will, I believe, soon return.

Miss O. Sure, he can't be so cruel: Does your ladyship wish to return so soon?

Lady F. I have not the habit of consulting my own wishes; but, I think, if they decide, we shall not return immediately. I have yet hardly formed an idea of London.

Mrs R. I shall quarrel with your lord and master, if he dares think of depriving us of you so soon. How do you dispose of yourself to-day?

Lady F. Sir George is going with me this morning to the mercer's, to chuse a silk; and then——

Mrs R. Chuse a silk for you!—Ha! ha! ha! Sir George chuses your laces too, I hope; your gloves, and your pincushions!

Lady F. Madam!

Mrs R. I am glad to see you blush, my dear Lady Frances. These are strange homespun ways! If you do these things, pray keep them secret. Lord bless us! If the town should know your husband chuses your gowns!

Miss O. You are very young, my lady, and have been brought up in solitude. The maxims you learnt among wood nymphs, in Shropshire, won't pass current here, I assure you.

Mrs R. Why, my dear creature, you look quite frightened—Come, you shall go with us to an exhibition and an auction.—Afterwards, we'll take a turn in the Park, and then drive to Kensington; so we shall be at home by four, to dress; and, in the evening, I'll attend you to Lady Brilliant's masquerade.

Lady F. I shall be very happy to be of your party, if Sir George has no engagements.

Mrs R. What! Do you stand so low in your own opinion, that you dare not trust yourself without Sir George? If you chuse to play Darby and Joan, my dear, you should have stayed in the country;—'tis an exhibition not calculated for London, I assure you.

Miss O. What, I suppose, my lady, you and Sir George will be seen pacing it comfortably round the Canal, arm and arm, and then go lovingly into the same carriage; dine *tête-a-tête*, spend the evening at picquet, and so go soberly to bed at eleven!—Such a snug plan may do for an attorney and his wife; but,

for Lady Frances Touchwood, 'tis as unsuitable as linsey-woolsey, or a black bonnet, at the Festino!

Lady F. These are rather new doctrines to me!—But, my dear Mrs Rackett, you and Miss Ogle must judge of these things better than I can. As you observe, I am but young, and may have caught absurd opinions.—Here is Sir George!

Enter SIR GEORGE.

Sir G. [*Aside.*] 'Sdeath, another room full!

Lady F. My love! Mrs. Rackett and Miss Ogle.

Mrs R. 'Give you joy, Sir George.—We came to rob you of Lady Frances for a few hours.

Sir G. A few hours!

Lady F. Oh, yes! I am going to an exhibition, and an auction, and the Park, and Kensington, and a thousand places!—It is quite ridiculous, I find, for married people to be always together.—We shall be laughed at!

Sir G. I am astonished!—Mrs Rackett, what does the dear creature mean?

Mrs R. Mean, Sir George!—what she says, I imagine.

Miss O. Why, you know, sir, as Lady Frances had the misfortune to be bred entirely in the country, she cannot be supposed to be versed in fashionable life.

Sir G. No! Heaven forbid she should!—If she had, madam, she would never have been my wife!

Mrs R. Are you serious?

Sir G. Perfectly so.—I should never have had the courage to have married a well-bred fine lady.

Miss O. Pray, sir, what do you take a fine lady to be, that you express such fear of her? [*Sneeringly.*

Sir G. A being easily described, madam, as she is seen every where, but in her own house. She sleeps at home, but she lives all over the town. In her

mind every sentiment gives place to the lust of conquest, and the vanity of being particular. The feelings of wife and mother are lost in the whirl of dissipation. If she continues virtuous, 'tis by chance—and, if she preserves her husband from ruin, 'tis by her dexterity at the card-table!—Such a woman I take to be a perfect fine lady!

Mrs R. And you I take to be a slanderous cynic of two-and-thirty.—Twenty years hence, one might have forgiven such a libel!—Now, sir, hear my definition of a fine lady:—She is a creature for whom nature has done much, and education more; she has taste, elegance, spirit, understanding. In her manner she is free, in her morals nice. Her behaviour is undistinguishingly polite to her husband, and all mankind;—her sentiments are for their hours of retirement. In a word, a fine lady is the life of conversation, the spirit of society, the joy of the public!—Pleasure follows wherever she appears, and the kindest wishes attend her slumbers.—Make haste, then, my dear Lady Frances, commence fine lady, and force your husband to acknowledge the justness of my picture.

Lady F. I am sure 'tis a delightful one. How can you dislike it, Sir George? You painted fashionable life in colours so disgusting, that I thought I hated it; but, on a nearer view, it seems charming. I have hitherto lived in obscurity; 'tis time that I should be a woman of the world. I long to begin;—my heart pants with expectation and delight!

Mrs R. Come, then; let us begin directly. I am impatient to introduce you to that society, which you were born to ornament and charm.

Lady F. Adieu, my love!—We shall meet again at dinner. [*Going.*

Sir G. Sure I am in a dream——Fanny!

Lady F. [*Returning.*] Sir George?

Sir G. Will you go without me?

Mrs R. Will you go without me!—Ha! ha! ha!

what a pathetic address! Why, sure, you would not always be seen, side by side, like two beans upon a stalk. Are you afraid to trust Lady Frances with me, sir?

Sir G. Heaven and earth! with whom can a man trust his wife in the present state of society! Formerly there were distinctions of character amongst ye; every class of females had its particular description; grandmothers were pious, aunts discreet, old maids censorious; but now, aunts, grandmothers, girls, and maiden gentlewomen, are all the same creature;—a wrinkle more or less is the sole difference between ye.

Mrs R. That maiden gentlewomen have lost their censoriousness, is surely not in your catalogue of grievances.

Sir G. Indeed it is—and ranked amongst the most serious grievances.—Things went well, madam, when the tongues of three or four old virgins kept all the wives and daughters of a parish in awe. They were the dragons that guarded the Hesperian fruit; and I wonder they have not been obliged, by act of parliament, to resume their function.

Mrs R. Ha! ha! ha! and pensioned, I suppose, for making strict enquiries into the lives and conversations of their neighbours.

Sir G. With all my heart, and empowered to oblige every woman to conform her conduct to her real situation. You, for instance, are a widow; your air should be sedate, your dress grave, your deportment matronly, and in all things an example to the young women growing up about you!—Instead of which, you are dressed for conquest, think of nothing but ensnaring hearts; are a coquette, a wit, and a fine lady.

Mrs R. Bear witness to what he says! A coquette, a wit, and a fine lady! Who would have expected an eulogy from such an ill-natured mortal!—

Valour to a soldier, wisdom to a judge, or glory to a prince, is not more than such a character to a woman.

Miss O. Sir George, I see, languishes for the charming society of a century and a half ago; when a grave 'squire, and a still graver dame, surrounded by a sober family, formed a stiff group, in a mouldy old house, in the corner of a park.

Mrs R. Delightful serenity! Undisturbed by any noise but the cawing of rooks, and the quarterly rumbling of an old family coach on a state visit; with the happy intervention of a friendly call from the parish apothecary, or the curate's wife.

Sir G. And what is the society of which you boast? —a mere chaos, in which all distinction of rank is lost in a ridiculous affectation of ease, and every different order of beings huddled together, as they were before the creation. In the same select party, you will often find the wife of a bishop and a sharper, of an earl and a fiddler. In short, 'tis one universal masquerade, all disguised in the same habits and manners.

Enter a SERVANT.

Serv. Mr Flutter. [*Exit* SERVANT.

Sir G. Here comes an illustration. Now, I defy you to tell, from his appearance, whether Flutter is a privy counsellor or a mercer, a lawyer or a grocer's prentice.

Enter FLUTTER.

Flut. Oh, just which you please, Sir George; so you don't make me a lord mayor. Ah, Mrs Rackett! ——Lady Frances, your most obedient; you look—now hang me, if that's not provoking!—had your gown been of another colour, I should have said the prettiest thing you ever heard in your life.

Miss O. Pray, give it us.

Flut. I was yesterday at Mrs Bloomer's. She was dressed all in green; no other colour to be seen but that of her face and bosom. So, says I, my dear Mrs Bloomer! you look like a carnation just bursting from its pod.

Sir G. And what said her husband?

Flut. Her husband! Why, her husband laughed, and said, a cucumber would have been a happier simile.

Sir G. But there are husbands, sir, who would rather have corrected than amended your comparison; I, for instance, should consider a man's complimenting my wife as an impertinence.

Flut. Why, what harm can there be in compliments? Sure they are not infectious; and, if they were, you, Sir George, of all people breathing, have reason to be satisfied about your lady's attachment; every body talks of it: that little bird there, that she killed out of jealousy, the most extraordinary instance of affection that ever was given.

Lady F. I kill a bird through jealousy! Heavens! Mr Flutter, how can you impute such a cruelty to me?

Sir G. I could have forgiven you, if you had.

Flut. Oh, what a blundering fool!—No, no—now I remember—'twas your bird, Lady Frances—that's it, your bullfinch, which Sir George, in one of the refinements of his passion, sent into the wide world to seek its fortune.—He took it for a knight in disguise.

Lady F. Is it possible! Oh, Sir George, could I have imagined it was you, who deprived me of a creature I was so fond of!

Sir G. Mr Flutter, you are one of those busy, idle, meddling people, who, from mere vacuity of mind, are the most dangerous inmates of a family. You have neither feelings nor opinions of your own; but,

like a glass in a tavern, bear about those of every blockhead who gives you his:—and, because you mean no harm, think yourselves excused, though broken friendships, discords, and murders, are the consequences of your indiscretions.

Flut. [*Taking out his Tablets.*] Vacuity of mind!—What was next? I'll write down this sermon: 'tis the first I have heard since my grandmother's funeral.

Miss O. Come, Lady Frances, you see what a cruel creature your loving husband can be! so let us leave him.

Sir G. Madam, Lady Frances shall not go.

Lady F. Shall not, Sir George!—This is the first time such an expression—— [*Weeping.*

Sir G. My love! my life!

Lady F. Don't imagine I'll be treated like a child! denied what I wish, and then pacified with sweet words.

Miss O. [*Apart.*] The bullfinch! that's an excellent subject; never let it down.

Lady F. I see plainly you would deprive me of every pleasure as well as of my sweet bird—out of pure love!—Barbarous man!

Sir G. 'Tis well, madam;—your resentment of that circumstance proves to me, what I did not before suspect, that you are deficient both in tenderness and understanding——Tremble to think the hour approaches, in which you would give worlds for such a proof of my love. Go, madam, give yourself to the public; abandon your heart to dissipation, and see if, in the scenes of gaiety and folly that await you, you can find a recompense for the lost affection of a doting husband. [*Exit* SIR GEORGE.

Flut. Lord, what a fine thing it is to have the gift of speech! I suppose, Sir George practises at Coachmakers' Hall, or the Black Horse in Bond Street.

Lady F. He is really angry; I cannot go.

Mrs R. Not go! Foolish creature! you are arrived

at the moment which, some time or other, was sure to happen, and every thing depends on the use you make of it.

Miss O. Come, Lady Frances, don't hesitate;—the minutes are precious.

Lady F. I could find in my heart!—and yet I won't give up neither.—If I should in this instance, he'll expect it for ever.

[*Exeunt* LADY FRANCES *and* MRS RACKETT.

Miss O. Now you act like a woman of spirit.

[*Exit.*

Flut. A fair tug, by Jupiter—between duty and pleasure!—Pleasure beats, and off we go, *Io triumphe!* [*Exit.*

SCENE II.

An Auction Room. Busts, Pictures, &c.

Enter SILVERTONGUE, *with three* PUFFERS.

Silv. Very well—very well.—This morning will be devoted to curiosity; my sale begins to-morrow at eleven. But, Mrs Fag, if you do no better than you did in Lord Fillagree's sale, I shall discharge you.—You want a knack terribly: and this dress—why, nobody can mistake you for a gentlewoman.

Fag. Very true, Mr Silvertongue; but I can't dress like a lady upon half-a-crown a day, as the saying is.—If you want me to dress like a lady, you must double my pay——Double or quits, Mr Silvertongue.

Silv.——*Five shillings* a day! what a demand! Why, woman, there are a thousand parsons in town who don't make five shillings a day; though they preach, pray, christen, marry, and bury, for the good

of the community.—Five shillings a day!—why, 'tis the pay of a lieutenant in a marching regiment, who keeps a servant, a mistress, a horse; fights, dresses, ogles, makes love, and dies upon five shillings a day.

Fag. Oh, as to that, all that's very right. A soldier should not be too fond of life; and forcing him to do all these things upon five shillings a day, is the readiest way to make him tired on't.

Silv. Well, Mask, have you been looking into the antiquaries?—have you got all the terms of art in a string—eh?

Mask. Yes, I have: I know the age of a coin by the taste; and can fix the birth-day of a medal, *anno mundi* or *anno domini*, though the green rust should have eaten up every character. But you know the brown suit and the wig I wear when I personate the antiquary are in limbo.

Silv. Those you have on may do.

Mask. These!—Why, in these I am a young travell'd *cognoscento*: Mr Glibb bought them of Sir Tom Totter's valet; and I am going there directly. You know his picture-sale comes on to-day; and I have got my head full of Parmegiano, Sal Rosa, Metzu, Tarbaek, and Vandermeer. I talk of the relief of Woovermans, the spirit of Teniers, the colouring of the Venetian school, and the correctness of the Roman. I distinguish Claude by his sleep, and Roysdael by his water. The rapidity of Tintoret's pencil strikes me at the first glance; whilst the harmony of Vandyk, and the glow of Corregio, point out their masters.

Enter COMPANY.

1 *Lady.* Hey-day, Mr Silvertongue! what, nobody here!

Silv. Oh, my lady, we shall have company enough in a trice; if your carriage is seen at my door, no other will pass it, I am sure.

1 *Lady.* Familiar monster! [*Aside.*] That's a beautiful Diana, Mr Silvertongue; but in the name of wonder, how came Actæon to be placed on the top of a house?

Silv. That's a David and Bathsheba, ma'am.

1 *Lady.* Oh, I crave their pardon!—I remember the names, but know nothing of the story.

Enter more COMPANY.

1 *Gent.* Was not that Lady Frances Touchwood, coming up with Mrs Rackett?

2 *Gent.* I think so;—yes, it is, 'faith.——Let us go nearer.

Enter LADY FRANCES, MRS RACKETT, *and* MISS OGLE.

3 *Gent.* Any thing worthy notice to-day?

Silv. Yes, sir, this is to be the first lot;—the model of a city, in wax.

2 *Gent.* The model of a city! what city?

Silv. That I have not been able to discover; but call it Rome, Pekin, or London, 'tis still a city; you'll find in it the same jarring interests, the same passions, the same virtues, and the same vices, whatever the name.

Gent. You may as well present us a map of *terra incognita.*

Silv. Oh, pardon me, sir! a lively imagination would convert this waxen city into an endless and interesting amusement. For instance, look into this little house on the right hand; there are four old prudes in it, taking care of their neighbours reputations. This elegant mansion on the left decorated with Corinthian pillars—who needs be told that it belongs to a court lord, and is the habitation of patriotism, philosophy, and virtue? Here's a city hall—the rich streams that issue from the windows, nourish a

neighbouring workhouse. Here's a church—we'll pass over that, the doors are shut. The parsonage-house comes next;—we'll take a peep here, however.—Look at the doctor! he's asleep on a volume of Toland; whilst his lady is putting on *rouge* for the masquerade.—Oh! oh! this can be no English city; our parsons are all orthodox, and their wives the daughters of modesty and meekness.

[LADY FRANCES *and* MISS OGLE *come forward, followed by* COURTALL.

Lady F. I wish Sir George were here.—This man follows me about, and stares at me in such a way, that I am quite uneasy.

Miss O. He has travell'd, and is heir to an immense estate; so he is impertinent by patent.

Court. You are very cruel, ladies. Miss Ogle—you will not let me speak to you. As to this little scornful beauty, she has frown'd me dead fifty times.

Lady F. Sir—I am a married woman. [*Confused.*

Court. A married woman! a good hint. [*Aside.*] 'Twould be a shame if such a charming woman was not married. But I see you are a Daphne just come from your sheep, and your meadows; your crook, and your waterfalls. Pray, now, who is the happy Damon, to whom you have vow'd eternal truth and constancy?

Miss O. 'Tis Lady Frances Touchwood, Mr Courtall, to whom you are speaking.

Court. Lady Frances! By Heaven, that's Saville's old flame. [*Aside.*] I beg your ladyship's pardon. I ought to have believed, that such beauty could belong only to your name—a name I have long been enamoured of; because I knew it to be that of the finest woman in the world. [MRS RACKETT *comes forward.*

Lady F. [*Apart.*] My dear Mrs Rackett, I am so frightened! Here's a man making love to me, though he knows I am married.

Mrs R. Oh, the sooner for that, my dear; don't mind him.—Were you at the Cassino last night, Mr Courtall?

Court. I look'd in.—'Twas impossible to stay. Nobody there but antiques. You'll be at Lady Brilliant's to-night, doubtless?

Mrs R. Yes, I go with Lady Frances.

Lady F. Bless me! I did not know this gentleman was acquainted with Mrs Rackett.—I behaved so rude to him! [*To* Miss Ogle.

Mrs R. Come, ma'am: [*Looking at her watch.*] 'tis past one. I protest, if we don't fly to Kensington, we sha'n't find a soul there.

Lady F. Won't this gentleman go with us?

Court. [*Looking surprised.*] To be sure! you make me happy, madam, beyond description.

Mrs R. Oh, never mind him—he'll follow.

[*Exeunt* Lady Frances, Mrs Rackett, *and* Miss Ogle.

Court. Lady Touchwood, with a vengeance! But 'tis always so; your reserved ladies are like ice, 'egad!—no sooner begin to soften than they melt!

[*Following.*

ACT THE THIRD.

SCENE I.

Mr Hardy's.

Enter Letitia *and* Mrs Rackett.

Mrs R. Come, prepare, prepare; your lover is coming.

Letit. My lover! confess, now, that my absence at dinner was a severe mortification to him.

Mrs R. I can't absolutely swear it spoiled his appetite; he ate as if he were hungry, and drank his wine as though he liked it.

Letit. What was the apology?

Mrs R. That you were ill;—but I gave him a hint, that your extreme bashfulness could not support his eye.

Letit. If I comprehend him, awkwardness and bashfulness are the last faults he can pardon in a woman: so expect to see me transform'd into the veriest maukin.

Mrs R. You persevere then?

Letit. Certainly. I know the design is a rash one, and the event important;—it either makes Doricourt mine by all the tenderest ties of passion, or deprives me of him for ever; and never to be his wife, will afflict me less than to be his wife, and not be beloved.

Mrs R. So you won't trust to the good old maxim,—"Marry first, and love will follow?"

Letit. As readily as I would venture my last guinea, that good fortune might follow. The woman, that has not touched the heart of a man, before he leads her to the altar, has scarcely a chance to charm it, when possession and security turn their powerful arms against her.—But here he comes—I'll disappear for a moment. Don't spare me. [*Exit* LETITIA.

Enter DORICOURT—*not seeing* MRS RACKETT.

Doric. So! [*Looking at a Picture.*] this is my mistress, I presume,—*Ma foi!* the painter has hit her off—the downcast eye—the blushing cheek—timid—apprehensive—bashful——A tear and a prayer-book would have made her *La Bella Magdalena*.

Give me a woman, in whose touching mien
A mind, a soul, a polish'd art is seen;
Whose motion speaks, whose poignant air can move;
Such are the darts to wound with endless love.

Mrs R. Is that an impromptu?

[*Touching him on the Shoulder with her Fan.*

Doric. [*Starting.*] Madam! [*Aside.*] Finely caught!—Not absolutely—it struck me during the desert, as a motto for your picture.

Mrs R. Gallantly turn'd!—I perceive, however, Miss Hardy's charms have made no violent impression on you.—And who can wonder?—the poor girl's defects are so obvious.

Doric. Defects!

Mrs R. Merely those of education.——Her father's indulgence ruin'd her.—*Mauvaise honte*—conceit and ignorance—all unite in the lady you are to marry.

Doric. Marry! I marry such a woman!—Your picture, I hope, is overcharged.—I marry *mauvaise honte*, pertness and ignorance!

Mrs R. Thank your stars, that ugliness and ill-temper are not added to the list.—You must think her handsome?

Doric. Half her personal beauty would content me;—but could the Medicean Venus be animated for me, and endowed with a vulgar soul, I should become the statue, and my heart transformed to marble.

Mrs R. Bless us!——We are in a hopeful way, then!

Doric. [*Aside.*] There must be some envy in this.—I see she is a coquette—Ha! ha! ha! And you imagine I am persuaded of the truth of your character? ha! ha! ha! Miss Hardy, I have been assured, madam, is elegant and accomplished——but one must allow for a lady's painting.

Mrs R. [*Aside.*] I'll be even with him for that. Ha! ha! ha! and so you have found me out!——

Well, I protest, I meant no harm; 'twas only to increase the *éclat* of her appearance, that I threw a veil over her charms.——Here comes the lady;—her elegance and accomplishments will announce themselves.

Enter LETITIA, *running.*

Letit. La, cousin, do you know, that our John——Oh, dear heart!—I didn't see you, sir.

[*Hanging down her Head, and dropping behind*

MRS RACKETT.

Mrs R. Fie, Letitia—Mr Doricourt thinks you a woman of elegant manners. Stand forward, and confirm his opinion.

Letit. No, no; keep before me.—He's my sweetheart; and 'tis impudent to look one's sweetheart in the face, you know.

Mrs R. You'll allow in future for a lady's painting, sir.—Ha! hà! ha!

Doric. I am astonished!

Letit. Well, hang it, I'll take heart—why, he is but a man, you know, cousin—and I'll let him see, I wasn't born in a wood, to be scared by an owl. [*Half apart; advances, and looks at him through her Fingers.*] He! he! he! [*Goes up to him and makes a very stiff, formal Courtesy—He bows.*]—You have been a great traveller, sir, I hear.

Doric. Yes, madam.

Letit. Then I wish you'd tell us about the fine sights you saw when you went over-sea—I have read in a book, that there are some countries, where the men and women are all horses.—Did you see any of them?

Mrs R. Mr Doricourt is not prepared, my dear, for these enquiries—he is reflecting on the importance of the question, and will answer you—when he can.

Letit. When he can! Why, he's as slow in speech

as aunt Margery, when she's reading Thomas Aquinas;—and stands gaping like mumchance.

Mrs R. Have a little discretion.

Letit. Hold your tongue!—Sure I may say what I please before I am married, if I can't afterwards. ——D'ye think a body does not know how to talk to a sweetheart—he is not the first I have had.

Doric. Indeed!

Letit. Oh, lud, he speaks!—Why, if you must know—there was the curate at home——When papa was a-hunting he used to come a-suitoring, and make speeches to me out of books—nobody knows, what a *mort* of fine things he used to say to me—and call me Venis, and Jubah, and Dinah.

Doric. And pray, fair lady, how did you answer him?

Letit. Why, I used to say, look you, Mr Curate, don't think to come over me with your flim-flams, for a better man than ever trod in your shoes is coming over-sea to marry me—but, 'ifags, I begin to think, I was out.—Parson Dobbins was the sprightfuller man of the two.

Doric. Surely, this cannot be Miss Hardy?

Letit. Laws, why, don't you know me?—You saw me to-day—but I was daunted before my father, and the lawyer, and all them; and did not care to speak out—so, may be, you thought I could not—but I can talk as fast as any body, when I know folks a little—And now I have shown my parts, I hope you'll like me better.

Enter HARDY.

Hardy. I foresee this won't do——Mr Doricourt, may be, you take my daughter for a fool, but you are mistaken—she's as sensible a girl as any in England.

Doric. I am convinced, she has a very uncommon

understanding, sir.—[*Aside.*] I did not think he had been such an ass!

Letit. My father will undo the whole.—Laws, papa, how can you think he can take me for a fool, —when every body knows, I beat the 'potecary at conundrums, last Christmas-time?—And didn't I make a string of names, all in riddles, for the Lady's Diary?—There was a little river, and a great house —that was Newcastle—there was what a lamb says, and three letters—that was *Ba*, and *k-e-r*, ker, baker. —there was——.

Hardy. Don't stand ba-a-ing there—you'll make me mad in a moment——I tell you, sir, that for all that, she's dev'lish sensible.

Doric. Sir, I give all possible credit to your assertions.

Letit. Laws, papa, do come along. If you stand watching, how can my sweetheart break his mind, and tell me how he admires me?

Doric. That would be difficult, indeed, madam.

Hardy. I tell you, Letty, I'll have no more of this. —I see well enough——

Letit. Laws, don't snub me before my husband—that is to be.—You'll teach him to snub me too—and, I believe by his looks, he'd like to begin now. So let us go—cousin, you may tell the gentleman what a genius I have—how I can cut watch-papers, and work catgut—make quadrille-baskets with pins, and take profiles in shade—ay, as well as the lady at No. 62, South Moulton Street, Grosvenor Square.

[*Exeunt* HARDY *and* LETITIA.

Mrs R. What think you of my painting now?

Doric. Oh, mere water-colours, ma'am——the lady has caricatured your picture.

Mrs R. And how does she strike you on the whole?

Doric. Like a good design, spoiled by the incapa-

city of the artist. Her faults are evidently the result of her father's weak indulgence. I observed an expression in her eye, that seemed to satirise the folly of her lips.

Mrs R. But at her age, when education is fixed, and manner becomes nature, hopes of improvement—

Doric. Would be as rational, as hopes of gold from a juggler's crucible.—Doricourt's wife must be incapable of improvement—but it must be, because she's got beyond it.

Mrs R. I am pleased your misfortune sits no heavier.

Doric. Your pardon, madam—so mercurial was the hour in which I was born, that misfortunes always go plump to the bottom of my heart, like a pebble in water, and leave the surface unruffled.——I shall certainly set off for Bath, or the other world, to-night—but whether I shall use a chaise, with four swift coursers, or go off in a tangent from the aperture of a pistol, deserves consideration—so I make my *adieus*. [*Going.*

Mrs R. Oh, but I entreat you, postpone your journey till to-morrow—determine on which you will—you must be this night at the masquerade.

Doric. Masquerade!

Mrs R. Why not?——If you resolve to visit the other world, you may as well take one night's pleasure first in this, you know.

Doric. 'Faith, that's very true;—ladies are the best philosophers after all—expect me at the masquerade. [*Exit* DORICOURT.

Mrs R. He's a charming fellow—I think Letitia sha'n't have him. [*Going.*

Enter HARDY.

Hardy. What, is he gone?

Mrs R. Yes: and I am glad he is—you would have ruin'd us!—Now, I beg, Mr Hardy, you won't

interfere in this business; it is a little out of your way. [*Exit* MRS RACKETT.

Hardy. Hang me, if I don't though—I foresee very clearly, what will be the end of it, if I leave ye to yourselves; so I'll e'en follow him to the masquerade, and tell him all about it.—Let me see—— what shall my dress be—A great Mogul? No—a grenadier? No—no—that, I foresee, would make a laugh——Hang me, if I don't send to my favourite little Quick, and borrow his Jew Isaac's dress—I know the dog likes a glass of good wine; so I'll give him a bottle of my forty-eight, and he shall teach me——Ay, that's it—I'll be cunning little Isaac—if they complain of my want of wit, I'll tell them, the cursed Duenna wears the breeches, and has spoilt my parts. [*Exit* HARDY.

SCENE II.

COURTALL'S.

Enter COURTALL, SAVILLE, *and three others, from an Apartment in the Back Scene—the last three tipsy.*

Court. You sha'n't go yet——another catch, and another bottle.

1 *Gent.* May I be a bottle, and an empty bottle, if you catch me at that!—Why, I am going to the masquerade. Jack ———, you know who I mean, is to meet me, and we are to have a leap at the new lustres.

2 *Gent.* And I am going to—a harlequin—[*Hiccups.*] Am not I in a pretty pickle to make harlequinades——and Tony here—he is going in the disguise—in the disguise—of a gentleman.

1 *Gent.* We are all very disguised—so bid them draw up—D'ye hear?

[*Exeunt the three* GENTLEMEN.

Sav. Thy skull, Courtall, is a lady's thimble:—no, an egg shell.

Court. Nay, then you are gone too: you never aspire to similes, but in your cups.

Sav. No, no; I am steady enough—but the fumes of the wine pass directly through thy egg-shell, and leave thy brain as cool as——Hey! I am quite sober; my similes fail me.

Court. Then we'll sit down here, and have one sober bottle.

Enter DICK.

Bring a bottle and glasses. [*Exit* DICK.

Sav. I'll not swallow another drop; no, though the juice should be the true Falernian.

Court. By the bright eyes of her you love, you shall drink her health.

Sav. Ah! [*Sitting down.*] Her I loved is gone—[*Sighing.*]—She's married!

Court. Then bless your stars you are not her husband! I would be husband to no woman in Europe, who was not dev'lish rich, and dev'lish ugly.

Sav. Wherefore ugly?

Court. Because she could not have the conscience to exact those attentions that a pretty wife expects; or, if she should, her resentments would be perfectly easy to me, nobody would undertake to revenge her cause.

Sav. Thou art a most licentious fellow!

Court. I should hate my own wife, that's certain: but I have a warm heart for those of other people; and so here's to the prettiest wife in England—Lady Frances Touchwood.

Sav. Lady Frances Touchwood! I rise to drink her. [*Drinks.*] How the devil came Lady Frances

in your head? I never knew you give a woman of chastity before.

Court. That's odd, for you have heard me give half the women of fashion in England.—But, pray, now, what do you take a woman of chastity to be?

[*Sneeringly.*

Sav. Such a woman as Lady Frances Touchwood, sir.

Court. Oh, you are grave, sir; I remember you were an adorer of hers.—Why didn't you marry her?

Sav. I had not the arrogance to look so high.—Had my fortune been worthy of her, she should not have been ignorant of my admiration.

Court. Precious fellow! What, I suppose you would not dare tell her now that you admire her?

Sav. No, nor you.

Court. By the lord I have told her so.

Sav. Have? Impossible!

Court. Ha! ha! ha!—Is it so?

Sav. How did she receive the declaration?

Court. Why, in the old way; blushed and frowned, and said, she was married.

Sav. What amazing things thou art capable of! I could more easily have taken the Pope by the beard, than profaned her ears with such a declaration.

Court. I shall meet her at Lady Brilliant's to-night, where I shall repeat it; and I'd lay my life, under a mask she'll hear it all without blush or frown.

Sav. [*Rising.*] 'Tis false, sir!—She won't.

Court. She will! [*Rising.*] Nay, I'll venture to lay a round sum, that I prevail on her to go out with me ——only to taste the fresh air, I mean.

Sav. Preposterous vanity! From this moment I suspect that half the victories you have boasted are false and slanderous as your pretended influence with Lady Frances.

Court. Pretended!—How should such a fellow as you, now, who never soared beyond a cherry-cheeked

daughter of a ploughman in Norfolk judge of the influence of a man of my figure and habits? I could show thee a list, in which there are names to shake thy faith in the whole sex:—and to that list I have no doubt of adding the name of Lady——

Sav. Hold, sir! My ears cannot bear the profanation;—you cannot—dare not approach her!—For your soul you dare not mention love to her! Her look would freeze the word, whilst it hovered on thy licentious lips.

Court. Whu! whu! Well, we shall see—this evening, by Jupiter, the trial shall be made.—If I fail—I fail.

Sav. I think thou dar'st not! but my life, my honour on her purity. [*Exit* SAVILLE.

Court. Hot-headed fool! But since he has brought it to this point, by gad I'll try what can be done with her ladyship—[*Musing—Rings.*]—She's frost-work, and the prejudices of education yet strong: *ergo*, passionate professions will only inflame her pride, and put her on her guard.——For other arts then!

Enter DICK.

Dick, do you know any of the servants at Sir George Touchwood's?

Dick. Yes, sir; I knows the groom, and one of the house-maids; for the matter o' that, she's my own cousin; and it was my mother that helped her to the place.

Court. Do you know Lady Frances's maid?

Dick. I can't say as how I know she.

Court. Do you know Sir George's valet?

Dick. No, sir; but Sally is very thick with Mr Gibson, Sir George's gentleman.

Court. Then go there directly, and employ Sally to discover whether her master goes to Lady Brilliant's this evening; and, if he does, the name of the shop that sold his habit.

Dick. Yes, sir.

Court. Be exact in your intelligence, and come to me at Boodle's. [*Exit* DICK.] If I cannot otherwise succeed, I'll beguile her as Jove did Alcmena, in the shape of her husband. The possession of so fine a woman—the triumph over Saville, are each a sufficient motive; and united, they shall be resistless.

[*Exit* COURTALL.

SCENE III.

The Street.

Enter SAVILLE.

Sav. The air has recovered me! What have I been doing! Perhaps my petulance may be the cause of her ruin, whose honour I asserted: his vanity is piqued;—and where women are concerned, Courtall can be a villain.

Enter DICK.—*Bows, and passes hastily.*

Ha! that's his servant!——Dick?

Dick. [*Returning.*] Sir!

Sav. Where are you going, Dick?

Dick. Going! I am going, sir, where my master sent me.

Sav. Well answered;—but I have a particular reason for my enquiry, and you must tell me.

Dick. Why then, sir, I am going to call upon a cousin of mine, that lives at Sir George Touchwood's.

Sav. Very well.—There, [*Gives him Money.*] you must make your cousin drink my health.—What are you going about?

Dick. Why, sir, I believe 'tis no harm, or elseways I am sure I would not blab.—I am only going

to ask if Sir George goes to the masquerade to-night, and what dress he wears.

Sav. Enough! Now, Dick, if you will call at my lodgings in your way back, and acquaint me with your cousin's intelligence, I'll double the trifle I have given you.

Dick. Bless your honour, I'll call——never fear.

[*Exit* DICK.

Sav. Surely the occasion may justify the means:—'tis doubly my duty to be Lady Frances's protector. Courtall, I see, is planning an artful scheme; but Saville shall out-plot him. [*Exit* SAVILLE.

SCENE IV.

SIR GEORGE TOUCHWOOD'S.

Enter SIR GEORGE *and* VILLERS.

Vill. For shame, Sir George! you have left Lady Frances in tears.—How can you afflict her?

Sir G. 'Tis I, that am afflicted;—my dream of happiness is over—Lady Frances and I are disunited.

Vill. The devil! Why, you have been in town but ten days: she can have made no acquaintance for a Commons affair yet.

Sir G. Pho! 'tis our minds that are disunited: she no longer places her whole delight in me; she has yielded herself up to the world!

Vill. Yielded herself up to the world! Why did you not bring her to town in a cage? Then she might have taken a peep at the world!—But, after all, what has the world done? A twelvemonth since you were the gayest fellow in it:—If any body asked who dresses best?—Sir George Touchwood.—Who is the most gallant man? Sir George Touchwood.—Who is the most wedded to amusements and dissipation? Sir

George Touchwood. And now Sir George is metamorphosed into a sour censor; and talks of fashionable life with as much bitterness as the old crabbed fellow in Rome.

Sir G. The moment I became possessed of such a jewel as Lady Frances, every thing wore a different complexion; that society in which I lived with so much *éclat*, became the object of my terror; and I think of the manners of polite life as I do of the atmosphere of a pest-house.—My wife is already infected; she was set upon this morning by maids, widows, and bachelors, who carried her off in triumph in spite of my displeasure.

Vill. Ay, to be sure; there would have been no triumph in the case, if you had not opposed it:—but I have heard the whole story from Mrs Racket; and I assure you, Lady Frances didn't enjoy the morning at all;—she wished for you fifty times.

Sir G. Are you sure of that?

Vill. Perfectly sure.

Sir G. I wish I had known it:——my uneasiness at dinner was occasioned by very different ideas.

Vill. Here then she comes, to receive your apology; but if she is true woman, her displeasure will rise in proportion to your contrition;—and till you grow careless about her pardon, she won't grant it:—however, I'll leave you.—Matrimonial duets are seldom set in the style I like. [*Exit* VILLERS.

Enter LADY FRANCES.

Sir G. The sweet sorrow that glitters in these eyes I cannot bear. [*Embracing her.*] Look cheerfully, you rogue.

Lady F. I cannot look otherwise, if you are pleased with me.

Sir G. Well, Fanny, to-day you made your *entrée* in the fashionable world; tell me honestly the impressions you received.

Lady F. Indeed, Sir George, I was so hurried from place to place, that I had not time to find out what my impressions were.

Sir G. That's the very spirit of the life you have chosen.

Lady F. Every body about me seemed happy—but every body seemed in a hurry to be happy somewhere else.

Sir G. And you like this?

Lady F. One must like what the rest of the world likes.

Sir G. Pernicious maxim!

Lady F. But, my dear Sir George, you have not promised to go with me to the masquerade.

Sir G. 'Twould be a shocking indecorum to be seen together, you know.

Lady F. Oh, no; I asked Mrs Rackett, and she told me we might be seen together at the masquerade,—without being laughed at.

Sir G. Really?

Lady F. Indeed, to tell you the truth, I could wish it was the fashion for married people to be inseparable: for I have more heartfelt satisfaction in fifteen minutes with you at my side, than fifteen days of amusement could give me without you.

Sir G. My sweet creature! How that confession charms me!—Let us begin the fashion.

Lady F. O, impossible! We should not gain a single proselyte; and you can't conceive what spiteful things would be said of us.—At Kensington today a lady met us, whom we saw at court, when we were presented; she lifted up her hands in amazement!—Bless me! said she to her companion, here's Lady Frances, without Sir Hurlo Thrumbo!—My dear Mrs Rackett, consider what an important charge you have! for Heaven's sake take her home again, or some enchanter on a flying dragon will descend and carry her off——Oh, said another, I dare say

Lady Frances has a clue at her heel, like the peerless Rosamond:——her tender swain would never have trusted her so far without such a precaution.

Sir G. Heaven and earth!—How shall innocence preserve its lustre, amidst manners so corrupt!—My dear Fanny, I feel a sentiment for thee at this moment tenderer than love—more animated than passion.—I could weep over that purity, exposed to the sullying breath of fashion, and the *ton*, in whose latitudinary vortex Chastity herself can scarcely move unspotted.

Enter GIBSON.

Gib. Your honour talk'd, I thought, something about going to the masquerade?

Sir G. Well.

Gib. Hasn't your honour—I thought your honour had forgot to order a dress.

Lady F. Well consider'd, Gibson.——Come, will you be Jew, Turk, or heretic; a Chinese emperor, or a ballad-singer; a rake, or a watchman?

Sir G. Oh, neither, my love; I can't take the trouble to support a character.

Lady F. You'll wear a domino then:—I saw a pink domino trimmed with blue, at the shop where I bought my habit.——Would you like it?

Sir G. Any thing, any thing.

Lady F. Then go about it directly, Gibson.—A pink domino, trimmed with blue, and a hat of the same.—Come, you have not seen my dress yet—it is most beautiful; I long to have it on. [*Exeunt.*

Gib. A pink domino trimmed with blue, and a hat of the same——What the devil can it signify to Sally now what his dress is to be?—Surely the slut has not made an assignation to meet her master!

[*Exit* GIBSON.

ACT THE FOURTH.

SCENE I.

A Masquerade.

A PARTY *dancing Cotillions in front—a Variety of Characters pass and repass.*

Enter FOLLY *on a Hobby Horse, with Cap and Bells.*

Mask. Hey! Tom Fool! what business have you here?

Foll. What, sir! affront a prince in his own dominions! [*Struts off.*

Mountebank. Who'll buy my nostrums? who'll buy my nostrums?

Mask. What are they? [*They all come round him.*

Mount. Different sorts, and for different customers. Here's a liquor for ladies—it expels the rage of gaming and gallantry. Here's a pill for members of parliament—good to settle consciences. Here's an eye-water for jealous husbands—it thickens the visual membrane, through which they see too clearly. Here's a decoction for the clergy—it never sits easy, if the patient has more than one living. Here's a draught for lawyers—a great promoter of modesty. Here's a powder for projectors—'twill rectify the fumes of an empty stomach, and dissipate their airy castles, and make them dream of beef and pudding.

Mask. Have you a nostrum that can give patience to young heirs, whose uncles and fathers are stout and healthy?

Mount. Yes; and I have an infusion for creditors—it gives resignation and humility, when fine gentlemen break their promises, or plead their privilege.

Mask. Come along:—I'll find you customers for your whole cargo.

Enter HARDY, *in the Dress of* ISAAC MENDOZA.

Hardy. Why, isn't it a shame to see so many stout, well-built young fellows, masquerading, and cutting *couranta's* here at home—instead of making the French cut capers to the tune of your cannon—or sweating the Spaniards with an English *Fandango?*—I foresee the end of all this.

Mask. Why, thou little testy Israelite! back to Duke's Place; and preach your tribe into a subscription for the good of the land on whose milk and honey ye fatten.—Where are your Joshuas and your Gideons, eh? What! all dwindled into stock-brokers, pedlars, and ragmen?

Hardy. No, not all. Some of us turn Christians, and by degrees grow into all the privileges of Englishmen! In the second generation we are patriots, rebels, courtiers, and husbands.

[*Puts his Fingers to his Forehead.*

Two other MASKS *advance.*

3 *Mask.* What, my little Isaac!——How the devil came you here? Where's your old Margaret?

Hardy. Oh, I have got rid of her.

3 *Mask.* How?

Hardy. Why, I persuaded a young Irishman that she was a blooming plump beauty of eighteen; so they made an elopement, ha! ha! ha! and she is now the toast of Tipperary.—Ha! there's cousin Backett and her party; they sha'n't know me.

[*Puts on his Mask.*

Enter MRS RACKETT, LADY FRANCES, SIR GEORGE, *and* FLUTTER.

Mrs R. Look at this dumpling Jew; he must be a Levite, by his figure.—You have surely practised the flesh-hook a long time, friend, to have raised that goodly presence.

Hardy. About as long, my brisk widow, as you have been angling for a second husband; but my hook has been better baited than yours.—You have only caught gudgeons, I see. [*Pointing to* FLUTTER.

Flut. Oh! this is one of the geniuses they hire to entertain the company with their accidental sallies.—Let me look at your common-place book, friend.—I want a few good things.

Hardy. I'd oblige you with all my heart; but you'll spoil them in repeating—or, if you should not, they'll gain you no reputation—for nobody will believe they are your own.

Sir G. He knows you, Flutter;—the little gentleman fancies himself a wit, I see.

Hardy. There's no depending on what you see—the eyes of the jealous are not to be trusted—look to your lady.

Flut. He knows you, Sir George.

Sir G. What! am I the town talk? [*Aside.*

Hardy. I can neither see Doricourt nor Letty.—I must find them out. [*Exit* HARDY.

Mrs R. Well, Lady Frances, is not all this charming? Could you have conceived such a brilliant assemblage of objects?

Lady F. Delightful! The days of enchantment are restored; the columns glow with sapphires and rubies. Emperors and fairies, beauties and dwarfs, meet me at every step!

Sir G. How lively are first impressions on sensible minds! In four hours, vapidity and languor

will take place of that exquisite sense of joy which flutters your little heart.

Mrs R. What an inhuman creature! Fate has not allowed us these sensations above ten times in our lives; and would you have us shorten them by anticipation?

Flut. O lord! your wise men are the greatest fools upon earth;—they reason about their enjoyments, and analyze their pleasures, whilst the essence escapes. Look, Lady Frances: D'ye see that figure strutting in the dress of an emperor? His father retails oranges in Botolph Lane. That gipsey is a maid of honour, and that ragman a physician.

Lady F. Why, you know every body!

Flut. Oh, every creature.—A mask is nothing at all to me.—I can give you the history of half the people here. In the next apartment there's a whole family, who, to my knowledge, have lived on watercresses this month, to make a figure here to-night;—but, to make up for that, they'll cram their pockets with cold ducks and chickens, for a carnival to-morrow.

Lady F. Oh, I should like to see this provident family.

Flut. Honour me with your arm.

[*Exeunt* FLUTTER *and* LADY FRANCES.

Mrs R. Come, Sir George, you shall be my beau.—We'll make the *tour* of the rooms, and meet them. Oh! your pardon, you must follow Lady Frances; or the wit and fine parts of Mr Flutter may drive you out of her head. Ha! ha! ha!

[*Exit* MRS RACKETT.

Sir G. I was going to follow her, and now I dare not. How can I be such a fool, as to be governed by the fear of that ridicule which I despise?

Exit SIR GEORGE.

Enter DORICOURT, *meeting a* MASK.

Doric. Ha! my lord;—I thought you had been engaged at Westminster on this important night.

Mask. So I am—I slipped out as soon as Lord Trope got upon his legs; I can *badiner* here an hour or two, and be back again before he is down.——There's a fine figure! I'll address her.

Enter LETITIA.

Charity, fair lady! Charity for a poor pilgrim.

Letit. Charity! If you mean my prayers, Heaven grant thee wit, pilgrim.

Mask. That blessing would do from a devotee: from you I ask other charities;——such charities as beauty should bestow—soft looks—sweet words—and kind wishes.

Letit. Alas! I am bankrupt of these, and forced to turn beggar myself.——There he is!—how shall I catch his attention?

Mask. Will you grant me no favour?

Letit. Yes, one—I'll make you my partner—not for life, but through the soft mazes of a minuet.—Dare you dance?

Doric. Some spirit in that.

Mask. I dare do any thing you command.

Doric. Do you know her, my lord?

Mask. No. Such a woman as that would formerly have been known in any disguise; but beauty is now common—Venus seems to have given her *cestus* to the whole sex.

A Minuet.

Doric. [*During the Minuet.*] She dances divinely! [*When ended.*] Somebody must know her? Let us enquire who she is. [*Exit.*

Enter SAVILLE *and* KITTY WILLIS, *habited like* LADY FRANCES.

Sav. I have seen Courtall in Sir George's habit, though he endeavoured to keep himself concealed. Go, and seat yourself in the tea-room, and on no account discover your face:—remember too, Kitty, that the woman you are to personate is a woman of virtue.

Kitty. I am afraid I shall find that a difficult character; indeed I believe it is seldom kept up through a whole masquerade.

Sav. Of that you can be no judge.——Follow my directions, and you shall be rewarded. [*Exit* KITTY.

Enter DORICOURT.

Doric. Ha! Saville! Did you see a lady dance just now?

Sav. No.

Doric. Very odd. Nobody knows her.

Sav. Where is Miss Hardy?

Doric. Cutting watch-papers, and making conundrums, I suppose.

Sav. What do you mean?

Doric. 'Faith, I hardly know. She's not here, however, Mrs Rackett tells me—I asked no further.

Sav. Your indifference seems increased.

Doric. Quite the reverse; 'tis advanced thirty-two degrees towards hatred.

Sav. You are jesting?

Doric. Then it must be with a very ill grace, my dear Saville: for I never felt so seriously: do you know the creature's almost an idiot?

Sav. What!

Doric. An idiot. What the devil shall I do with her? Egad! I think I'll feign myself mad—and then Hardy will propose to cancel the engagements.

Sav. An excellent expedient! I must leave you;

you are mysterious, and I can't stay to unravel you. —I came here to watch over innocence and beauty.

Doric. The guardian of innocence and beauty at three-and-twenty! Is there not a cloven foot under that black gown, Saville?

Sav. No, 'faith. Courtall is here on a most detestable design. I found means to get a knowledge of the lady's dress, and have brought a girl to personate her, whose reputation cannot be hurt.—You shall know the result to-morrow. Adieu.

[*Exit* SAVILLE.

Doric. [*Musing.*] Yes, I think that will do. I'll feign myself mad, fee the doctor to pronounce me incurable, and when the parchments are destroyed—

(*As he stands in a musing posture,* LETITIA *enters and sings.*)

SONG.

Wake! thou son of dulness, wake!
From thy drowsy senses shake
All the spells that care employs,
Cheating mortals of their joys.

II.

Light-wing'd spirits, hither haste!
Who prepare for mortal taste
All the gifts that pleasure sends,
Every bliss that youth attends.

III.

Touch his feelings, rouse his soul,
Whilst the sparkling moments roll;
Bid them wake to new delight,
Crown the magic of the night.

Doric. By heaven, the same sweet creature!

Letit. You have chosen an odd situation for study,

Fashion and taste preside in this spot:—They throw their spells around you:—ten thousand delights spring up at their command;—and you, a stoic—a being without senses, are wrapt in reflection.

Doric. And you, the most charming being in the world, awaken me to admiration. Did you come from the stars?

Letit. Yes, and I shall reascend in a moment.

Doric. Pray show me your face before you go.

Letit. Beware of imprudent curiosity; it lost Paradise.

Doric. Eve's curiosity was raised by the devil;—'tis an angel tempts mine.—So your allusion is not in point.

Letit. But why would you see my face?

Doric. To fall in love with it.

Letit. And what then?

Doric. Why, then—Ay, curse it; there's the rub! [*Aside.*

Letit. Your mistress will be angry;—but perhaps you have no mistress?

Doric. Yes, yes, and a sweet one it is!

Letit. What! is she old?

Doric. No.

Letit. Ugly?

Doric. No.

Letit. What then?

Doric. Pho! don't talk about her; but show me your face.

Letit. My vanity forbids it;—'twould frighten you.

Doric. Impossible! Your shape is graceful, your air bewitching, your bosom transparent, and your chin would tempt me to kiss it, if I did not see a pouting red lip above it, that demands——

Letit. You grow too free.

Doric. Show me your face, then—only half a glance.

Letit. Not for worlds!

Doric. What! you will have a little gentle force? [*Attempts to seize her Mask.*

Letit. I am gone for ever! [*Exit.*

Doric. 'Tis false;—I'll follow to the end. [*Exit.*

FLUTTER, LADY FRANCES, *and* SAVILLE *advance.*

Lady F. How can you be thus interested for a stranger?

Sav. Goodness will have interest; its home is heaven: on earth, 'tis but a wanderer. Imprudent lady, why have you left the side of your protector? Where is your husband?

Flut. Why, what's that to him?

Lady F. Surely it can't be merely his habit;—there's something in him that awes me.

Flut. Pho! 'tis only his grey beard. I know him; he keeps a lottery office on Cornhill.

Sav. My province, as an enchanter, lays open every secret to me, lady! there are dangers abroad—Beware! [*Exit.*

Lady F. 'Tis very odd; his manner has made me tremble. Let us seek Sir George.

Flut. He is coming towards us.

COURTALL *comes forward habited like* SIR GEORGE.

Court. There she is! If I can but disengage her from that fool, Flutter—crown me, ye schemers, with immortal wreaths!

Lady F. O, my dear Sir George! I rejoice to meet you—an old conjurer has been frightening me with his prophecies.—Where's Mrs Rackett?

Court. In the dancing-room.—I promised to send you to her, Mr Flutter.

Flut. Ah! she wants me to dance. With all my heart. [*Exit.*

Lady F. Why do you keep on your mask?—'tis too warm.

Court. 'Tis very warm—I want air—let us go.

Lady F. You seem quite agitated.—Sha'n't we bid our company adieu?

Court. No, no;—there's no time for forms. I'll just give directions to the carriage, and be with you in a moment. [*Going, steps back.*] Put on your mask; I have a particular reason for it. [*Exit.*

SAVILLE *advances with* KITTY.

Sav. Now, Kitty, you know your lesson. Lady Frances, [*Takes off his Mask.*] let me lead you to your husband.

Lady F. Heavens! is Mr Saville the conjurer? Sir George is just stept to the door, to give directions —We are going home immediately.

Sav. No, madam, you are deceived: Sir George is this way.

Lady F. This is astonishing!

Sav. Be not alarmed: you have escaped a snare, and shall be in safety in a moment.

[*Exeunt* SAVILLE *and* LADY FRANCES.

Enter COURTALL, *and seizes* KITTY'S *Hand.*

Court. Now.

Kitty. 'Tis pity to go so soon.

Court. Perhaps I may bring you back, my angel—but go now you must.

[*Exeunt* COURTALL *and* KITTY.—*Music.*

DORICOURT *and* LETITIA *come forward.*

Doric. By Heavens! I never was charmed till now. —English beauty—French vivacity—wit—elegance. Your name, my angel! tell me your name, though you persist in concealing your face.

Letit. My name has a spell in it.

Doric. I thought so; it must be charming.

Letit. But, if revealed, the charm is broke.

Doric. I'll answer for its force.

Letit. Suppose it Harriet, or Charlotte, or Maria —or—

Doric. Hang Harriet, and Charlotte, and Maria—the name your father gave ye!

Letit. That can't be worth knowing, 'tis so transient a thing.

Doric. How transient?

Letit. Heaven forbid my name should be lasting till I am married.

Doric. Married! the chains of matrimony are too heavy and vulgar for such a spirit as yours. The flowery wreaths of Cupid are the only bands you should wear!

Letit. They are the lightest, I believe: but 'tis possible to wear those of marriage gracefully.—Throw them loosely round, and twist them in a true-lover's knot for the bosom.

Doric. An angel! But what will you be when a wife?

Letit. A woman.—If my husband should prove a churl, a fool, or a tyrant, I'd break his heart, ruin his fortune, elope with the first pretty fellow that asked me—and return the contempt of the world with scorn, whilst my feelings preyed upon my life.

Doric. Amazing!—[*Aside.*] What if you loved him, and he were worthy of your love?

Letit. Why, then I'd be any thing—and all!—grave, gay, capricious—the soul of whim, the spirit of variety—live with him in the eye of fashion, or in the shade of retirement—change my country, my sex—feast with him in an Esquimaux hut, or a Persian pavilion—join him in the victorious war-dance on the borders of Lake Ontario, or sleep to the soft breathings of the flute in the cinnamon groves of Ceylon—dig with him in the mines of Golconda, or enter the dangerous precincts of the Mogul's seraglio ——cheat him of his wishes, and overturn his empire, to restore the husband of my heart to the blessings of liberty and love.

Doric. Delightful wildness! oh to catch thee, and hold thee for ever in this little cage!

[*Attempting to clasp her.*

Letit. Hold, sir. Though Cupid must give the bait that tempts me to the snare, 'tis Hymen must spread the net to catch me.

Doric. 'Tis in vain to assume airs of coldness—Fate has ordained you mine.

Letit. How do you know?

Doric. I feel it here. I never met with a woman so perfectly to my taste; and I won't believe it formed you so, on purpose to tantalize me.

Letit. This moment is worth a whole existence! [*Aside.*

Doric. Come show me your face, and rivet my chains.

Letit. To-morrow you shall be satisfied.

Doric. To-morrow! and not to night?

Letit. No.

Doric. Where then shall I wait on you to-morrow?—Where see you?

Letit. You shall see me in an hour when you least expect me.

Doric. Why all this mystery?

Letit. I like to be mysterious. At present be content to know, that I am a woman of family and fortune. Adieu!

Enter HARDY.

Hardy. Adieu! Then I am come in at the fag end! [*Aside.*

Doric. Let me see you to your carriage.

Letit. As you value knowing me, stir not a step. If I am follow'd you never see me more. [*Exit.*

Doric. Barbarous creature! She's gone! W[illegible] and is this really serious?—Am I in love?—Pho! it can't be—O, Flutter! do you know that charming creature?

Enter FLUTTER.

Flut. What charming creature? I pass'd a thousand.

Doric. She went out at that door as you enter'd.

Flut. Oh, yes;—I know her very well.

Doric. Do you, my dear fellow, who?

Flut. She's kept by Lord George Jennett.

Hardy. Impudent scoundrel! [*Aside.*

Doric. Kept!

Flut. Yes; Colonel Gorget had her first;—then Mr Loveill;—then—I forget exactly how many; and at last she's Lord George's.

[*Talks to other Masks.*

Doric. I'll murder Gorget, poison Lord George, and shoot myself.

Hardy. Now's the time, I see, to clear up the whole. Mr Doricourt!—I say—Flutter was mistaken; I know who you are in love with.

Doric. A strange *rencontre!* Who?

Hardy. My Letty.

Doric. Oh! I understand your rebuke;—'tis too soon, sir, to assume the father-in-law.

Hardy. Zounds! what do you mean by that? I tell you that the lady you admire is Letitia Hardy.

Doric. I am glad you are so well satisfied with the state of my heart.—I wish I was! [*Exit.*

Hardy. Stop a moment.—Stop, I say! What, you won't? Very well—if I don't play you a trick for this, may I never be a grandfather! I'll plot with Letty now, and not against her; aye, hang me if I don't! There's something in my head that shall tingle in his heart. He shall have a lecture upon impatience, that, I foresee, he'll be the better for as long as he lives. [*Exit.*

SAVILLE *comes forward, with other* MASKS.

Sav. Flutter, come with us; we're going to raise a laugh at Courtall's.

Flut. With all my heart. "Live to live," was my father's motto: "Live to laugh," is mine.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

COURTALL'S.

Enter KITTY *and* COURTALL.

Kitty. Where have you brought me, Sir C This is not our home!

Court. 'Tis my home, beautiful Lady Frances! [*Kneels, and takes off his Mask.*] Oh, forgive the ardency of my passion which has compelled me to deceive you!

Kitty. Mr Courtall! what will become of me?

Court. Oh, say but that you pardon the wretch who adores you. Did you but know the agonizing tortures of my heart, since I had the felicity of conversing with you this morning—or the despair that now— [*Knock.*

Kitty. Oh, I'm undone!

Court. Zounds! my dear Lady Frances! I am not at home! Rascal! do you hear?—Let nobody in; I am not at home!

Serv. [*Without.*] Sir, I told the gentlemen so.

Court. Eternal curses! they are coming up. Step into this room, adorable creature! one moment; I'll throw them out of the window, if they stay three.

[*Exit* KITTY, *through the Back Scene.*

Enter SAVILLE, FLUTTER, *and* MASKS.

Flut. O Gemini! beg the petticoat's pardon.—Just saw a corner of it.

1 *Mask.* No wonder admittance was so difficult. I thought you took us for bailiffs.

Court. Upon my soul, I am devilish glad to see you—but you perceive how I am circumstanced. Excuse me at this moment.

2 *Mask.* Tell us who it is then.

Court. Oh, fie!

Flut. We won't blab.

Court. I can't, upon honour.—Thus far—she's a woman of the first character and rank. Saville, [*Takes him aside.*] have I influence, or have I not?

Sav. Why, sure, you do not insinuate—

Court. No, not insinuate, but swear, that she's now in my bed-chamber; by gad, I don't deceive you.—There's generalship, you rogue! such an humble, distant sighing fellow as thou art, at the end of a six months siege, would have boasted of a kiss from her glove. I only give the signal, and—pop!—she's in my arms!

Sav. What, Lady Fran——

Court. Hush! You shall see her name to-morrow morning in red letters at the end of my list. Gentlemen, you must excuse me now. Come and drink chocolate at twelve, but—

Sav. Ay, let us go, out of respect to the lady:—'tis a person of rank.

Flut. Is it?—Then I'll have a peep at her. [*Runs to the Door in the Back Scene.*]

Court. This is too much, sir.

[*Trying to prevent him.*

1 *Mask.* By Jupiter, we'll all have a peep.

Court. Gentlemen, consider—for Heaven's sake—a lady of quality. What will be the consequences?

Flut. The consequences!—Why, you'll have your

throat cut, that's all—but I'll write your elegy. So now for the door! [*Part open the Door, whilst the rest hold* COURTALL.]—Beg your ladyship's pardon, whoever you are: [*Leads her out.*] Emerge from darkness, like the glorious sun, and bless the wond'ring circle with your charms. [*Takes off her Mask.*

Sav. Kitty Willis! ha! ha! ha!

Omnes. Kitty Willis! ha! ha! ha! Kitty Willis!

Mask. Why, what a fellow you are, Courtall, to attempt imposing on your friends in this manner! A lady of quality! an earl's daughter!—Your ladyship's most obedient—ha! ha! ha!

Sav. Courtall, have you influence, or have you not?

Flut. The man's moon-struck.

Court. Hell and ten thousand furies seize you all together!

Kitty. What, me too, Mr Courtall? me, whom you have knelt to, prayed to, and adored?

Flut. That's right, Kitty; give him a little more.

Court. Disappointed and laugh'd at!

Sav. Laugh'd at, and despised. I have fulfilled my design, which was to expose your villainy, and laugh at your presumption. Adieu, sir; remember how you again boast of your influence with women of rank; and when you next want amusement, dare not to look up to the virtuous and to the noble for a companion. [*Exit, leading* KITTY.

Flut. And, Courtall, before you carry a lady into your bed-chamber again, look under her mask, d'ye hear? [*Exit.*

Court. There's no bearing this! I'll set off for Paris directly. [*Exit.*

ACT THE FIFTH.

SCENE I.

HARDY'S.

Enter HARDY *and* VILLERS.

Vill. Whimsical enough! Dying for her, and hates her! Believes her a fool, and a woman of brilliant understanding!

Hardy. As true as you are alive;—but when I went up to him last night, at the Pantheon, out of downright goodnature, to explain things—my gentleman whips round upon his heel, and snapt me as short as if I had been a beggar woman with six children, and he overseer of the parish.

Vill. Here comes the wonder-worker!

Enter LETITIA.

Here comes the enchantress, who can go to masquerades, and sing and dance, and talk a man out of his wits!—But pray, have we morning masquerades?

Letit. Oh, no—but I am so enamoured of this all-conquering habit, that I could not resist putting it on, the moment I had breakfasted. I shall wear it on the day I am married, and then lay it by in spice, —like the miraculous robes of St Bridget.

Vill. That's as most brides do. The charms, that

helped to catch the husband, are generally laid by, one after another, till the lady grows a downright wife, and then runs crying to her mother, because she has transform'd her lover into a downright husband.

Hardy. Listen to me.—I ha'n't slept to-night, for thinking of plots to plague Doricourt;—and they drove one another out of my head so quick, that I was as giddy as a goose, and could make nothing of them—I wish to goodness you could contrive something.

Vill. Contrive to plague him! Nothing so easy. Don't undeceive him, madam, till he is your husband. Marry him, while he possesses the sentiments you labour'd to give him of Miss Hardy—and when you are his wife—

Letit. Oh, Heavens! I see the whole—that's the very thing. My dear Mr Villers, you are the divinest man!

Vill. Don't make love to me, hussey.

Enter MRS RACKETT.

Mrs R. No, pray don't—for I design to have Villers myself, in about six years.—There's an oddity in him that pleases me.—He holds women in contempt; and I should like to have an opportunity of breaking his heart for that.

Vill. And when I am heartily tired of life, I know no woman whom I would with more pleasure make my executioner.

Hardy. It cannot be—I foresee it will be impossible to bring it about. You know the wedding wasn't to take place this week, or more—and Letty will never be able to play the fool so long.

Vill. The knot shall be tied to-night.—I have it all here. [*Pointing to his Forehead.*] the licence is ready.—Feign yourself ill; send for Doricourt, and tell him

you can't go out of the world in peace, except you see the ceremony performed.

Hardy. I feign myself ill! I could as soon feign myself a Roman ambassador.——I was never ill in my life, but with the tooth-ache—when Letty's mother was a-breeding, I had all the qualms.

Vill. Oh, I have no fears for you.—But what says Miss Hardy? Are you willing to make the irrevocable vow before night?

Letit. Oh, Heavens!—I—I—'Tis so exceeding sudden that really——

Mrs R. That really she is frightened out of her wits—lest it should be impossible to bring matters about. But I have taken the scheme into my protection, and you shall be Mrs Doricourt before night. Come, [*To* MR HARDY.] to bed directly: your room shall be crammed with phials, and all the apparatus of death;—then, heigh presto! for Doricourt.

Vill. You go and put off your conquering dress, [*To* LETTY.] and get all your awkward airs ready—And you practice a few groans, [*To* HARDY.]—And you—if possible—an air of gravity, [*To* MRS RACKETT.] I'll answer for the plot.

Letit. Married in jest! 'Tis an odd idea! Well, I'll venture it. [*Exeunt* LETITIA *and* MRS RACKETT.

Vill. Ay, I'll be sworn! [*Looks at his Watch*] 'Tis past three. The budget's to be opened this morning I'll just step down to the house.—Will you go?

Hardy. What! with a mortal sickness?

Vill. What a blockhead! I believe if half of us were to stay away with mortal sicknesses, it would be for the health of the nation. Good morning.—I'll call and feel your pulse as I come back. [*Exit.*

Hardy. You won't find them over brisk, I fancy. I foresee some ill happening from this making believe to die before one's time. But, hang it—a hem!—I am a stout man yet; only fifty-six—What's that? In

the last yearly bills, there were three lived to above on hundred. Fifty-six!—Fiddle-de-dee! I am not afraid, not I. *Exit.*

SCENE II.

DORICOURT'S.

DORICOURT *in his Robe de Chambre.*

Enter SAVILLE.

Sav. Undressed so late?

Doric. I didn't go to bed till late—'twas late before I slept—late when I rose. Do you know Lord George Jennett?

Sav. Yes.

Doric. Has he a mistress?

Sav. Yes.

Doric. What sort of creature is she?

Sav. Why she spends him three thousand a year with the ease of a duchess, and entertains his friends with the grace of a Ninon. Ergo, she is handsome, spirited, and clever. [DORICOURT *walks about disordered.*] In the name of caprice, what ails you?

Doric. You have hit it—*Elle est mon caprice.*—The mistress of Lord George Jennett is my caprice—Oh, insufferable!

Sav. What, you saw her at the masquerade?

Doric. Saw her, loved her, died for her—without knowing her—And now, the curse is, I can't hate her.

Sav. Ridiculous enough! All this distress about a kept woman, whom any man may have, I dare swear, in a fortnight—They've been jarring some time.

Doric. Have her! The sentiment I have conceived for the witch is so unaccountable, that, in that line, I cannot bear her idea. Were she a woman of honour, for a wife, I could adore her—but I really believe, if she should send me an assignation, I should hate her.

Sav. Hey-day! This sounds like love. What becomes of poor Miss Hardy?

Doric. Her name has given me an ague! Dear Saville, how shall I contrive to make old Hardy cancel the engagements? the moiety of the estate, which he will forfeit, shall be his the next moment, by deed of gift.

Sav. Let me see—Can't you get it insinuated that you are a devilish wild fellow; that you are an infidel, and attached to wenching, gaming, and so forth?

Doric. Ay, such a character might have done some good two centuries back. But who the devil can it frighten now?—I believe it must be the mad scheme at last.—There, will that do for a grin?

Sav. Ridiculous!—But, how are you certain that the woman who has so bewilder'd you belongs to Lord George?

Doric. Flutter told me so.

Sav. Then fifty to one against the intelligence.

Doric. It must be so. There was a mystery in her manner; for which nothing else can account. [*A violent Rap.*] Who can this be? [SAVILLE *looks out.*

Sav. The proverb is your answer—'tis Flutter himself. Tip him a scene of the madman, and see how it takes.

Doric. I will—a good way to send it about town. Shall it be of the melancholy kind, or the raving?

Sav. Rant!—rant!—Here he comes.

Doric. Talk not to me, who can pull comets by the beard, and overset an island!

Enter FLUTTER.

There! This is he!—this is he, who hath sent my poor soul, without coat or breeches, to be tossed about in ether, like a duck-feather! Villain, give me my soul again!

Flut. Upon my soul, I hav'n't got it.

[*Exceedingly frightened.*

Sav. Oh, Mr Flutter, what a melancholy sight!—I little thought to have seen my poor friend reduced to this.

Flut. Mercy defend me! What, is he mad?

Sav. You see how it is. A cursed Italian lady—jealousy—gave him a drug; and every full of the moon—

Doric. Moon! Who dares talk of the moon? The patroness of genius—the rectifier of wits—the—Oh! here she is!—I feel her—she tugs at my brain—she has it—she has it—Oh! [*Exit.*

Flut. Well, this is dreadful! exceeding dreadful, I protest. Have you had Monro?

Sav. Not yet. The worthy Miss Hardy—what a misfortune!

Flut. Ay, very true.—Do they know it?

Sav. Oh, no; the paroxysm seized him but this morning.

Flut. Adieu; I can't stay. [*Going in great Haste.*

Sav. But you must [*Holding him.*] stay, and assist me:—perhaps he'll return again in a moment; and, when he is in this way, his strength is prodigious.

Flut. Can't, indeed—can't, upon my soul. [*Going.*

Sav. Flutter—don't make a mistake, now;—remember, 'tis Doricourt that's mad.

Flut. Yes—you mad.

Sav. No, no; Doricourt.

Flut. Egad, I'll say you are both mad, and then I can't mistake. [*Exeunt severally.*

SCENE III.

SIR GEORGE TOUCHWOOD'S.

Enter SIR GEORGE *and* LADY FRANCES.

Sir G. The bird is escaped—Courtall is gone to France.

Lady F. Heaven and earth! Have you been to seek him?

Sir G. Seek him! ay.

Lady F. How did you get his name? I should never have told it you.

Sir G. I learnt it in the first coffeehouse I entered. —Every body is full of the story.

Lady F. Thank Heaven, he's gone!—But I have a story for you—The Hardy family are forming a plot upon your friend Doricourt, and we are expected in the evening to assist.

Sir G. With all my heart, my angel; but I can't stay to hear it unfolded. They told me Mr Saville would be at home in half an hour, and I am impatient to see him. The adventure of last night——

Lady F. Think of it only with gratitude. The danger I was in has overset a new system of conduct, that, perhaps, I was too much inclined to adopt. But, henceforward, my dear Sir George, you shall be my constant companion and protector. And when they ridicule the unfashionable monsters, the felicity of our hearts shall make their satire pointless.

Sir G. Charming angel! You almost reconcile me to Courtall. Hark! here's company. [*Stepping to the Door.*] 'Tis your lively widow—I'll step down the back stairs to escape her. [*Exit* SIR GEORGE.

Enter MRS RACKETT.

Mrs R. Oh, Lady Frances! I am shocked to death.—Have you received a card from us?

Lady F. Yes; within these twenty minutes.

Mrs R. Ay, 'tis of no consequence.—'Tis all over —Doricourt's mad.

Lady F. Mad!

Mrs R. My poor Letitia!—Just as we were enjoying ourselves with the prospect of a scheme that was planned for their mutual happiness, in came Flutter, breathless, with the intelligence:—I flew here to know if you had heard it.

Lady F. No, indeed—and I hope it is one of Mr Flutter's dreams.

Enter SAVILLE.

Apropos; now we shall be inform'd. Mr Saville, I rejoice to see you, though Sir George will be disappointed: he's gone to your lodgings.

Sav. I should have been happy to have prevented Sir George. I hope your ladyship's adventure last night did not disturb your dreams?

Lady F. Not at all; for I never slept a moment. My escape, and the importance of my obligations to you, employed my thoughts. But we have just had shocking intelligence—Is it true that Doricourt is mad?

Sav. So; the business is done. [*Aside.*]—Madam, I am sorry to say, that I have just been a melancholy witness of his ravings; he was in the height of a paroxysm.

Mrs R. Oh, there can be no doubt of it! Flutter told us the whole history. Some Italian princess gave him a drug in a box of sweetmeats, sent to him by her own page; and it renders him lunatic every month. Poor Miss Hardy! I never felt so much on any occasion in my life.

Sav. To soften your concern, I will inform you,

madam, that Miss Hardy is less to be pitied than you imagine.

Mrs R. Why so, sir?

Sav. 'Tis rather a delicate subject—but he did not love Miss Hardy.

Mrs R. He did love Miss Hardy, sir, and would have been the happiest of men.

Sav. Pardon me, madam; his heart was not only free from that lady's chains, but absolutely captivated by another.

Mrs R. No, sir—no. It was Miss Hardy who captivated him. She met him last night at the masquerade, and charmed him in disguise. He professed the most violent passion for her; and a plan was laid this evening to cheat him into happiness.

Sav. Ha! ha! ha!—Upon my soul I must beg your pardon! I have not eaten of the Italian princess's box of sweetmeats, sent by her own page; and yet I am as mad as Doricourt, ha! ha! ha!

Mrs R. So it appears. What can all this mean?

Sav. Why, madam, he is at present in his perfect senses; but he'll lose them in ten minutes, through joy. The madness was only a feint, to avoid marrying Miss Hardy, ha! ha! ha!—I'll carry him the intelligence directly. [*Going.*

Mrs R. Not for worlds. I owe him revenge, now, for what he has made us suffer. You must promise not to divulge a syllable I have told you; and when Doricourt is summoned to Mr Hardy's, prevail on him to come—madness and all.

Lady F. Pray do. I should like to see him showing off, now I am in the secret.

Sav. You must be obeyed, though 'tis inhuman to conceal his happiness.

Mrs R. I am going home; so I'll set you down at his lodgings, and acquaint you, by the way, with our whole scheme. *Allons!*

Sav. I attend you. [*Leading her out.*

Mrs R. You won't fail us?

[*Exeunt* SAVILLE *and* MRS RACKETT.

Lady F. No: depend on us. [*Exit.*

SCENE IV.

DORICOURT'S.

DORICOURT *seated, reading.*

Doric. [*Flings away the Book.*] What effect can the morals of fourscore have on a mind torn with passion? [*Musing.*] Is it possible such a soul as hers can support itself in so humiliating a situation? A kept woman! [*Rising.*] Well, well—I am glad it is so—I am glad it is so!

Enter SAVILLE.

Sav. What a happy dog you are, Doricourt! I might have been mad, or beggared, or pistoled myself, without its being mentioned—But you, forsooth! the whole female world is concerned for. I reported the state of your brain to five different women. The lip of the first trembled; the white bosom of the second heaved a sigh; the third ejaculated, and turned her eye—to the glass; the fourth blessed herself: and the fifth said, whilst she pinned a curl, "Well, now, perhaps, he'll be an amusing companion: his native dulness was intolerable."

Doric. Envy! sheer envy, by the smiles of Hebe! —There are not less than forty pair of the brightest eyes in town will drop crystals when they hear of my misfortune.

Sav. Well, but I have news for you:—Poor Hardy is confined to his bed; they say he is going out of

the world by the first post, and he wants to give you his blessing.

Doric. Ill! so ill! I am sorry from my soul. He's a worthy little fellow—if he had not the gift of foreseeing so strongly.

Sav. Well; you must go and take leave.

Doric. What! to act the lunatic in the dying man's chamber?

Sav. Exactly the thing; and will bring your business to a short issue: for his last commands must be, that you are not to marry his daughter.

Doric. That's true, by Jupiter!—and yet hang, it, impose upon a poor fellow at so serious a moment!—I can't do it.

Sav. You must, 'faith. I am answerable for your appearance, though it should be in a strait waistcoat. He knows your situation, and seems the more desirous of an interview.

Doric. I don't like encountering Rackett.—She's an arch little devil, and will discover the cheat.

Sav. There's a fellow!—Cheated ninety-nine women, and now afraid of the hundredth.

Doric. And with reason—for that hundredth is a widow. [*Exit.*

SCENE V.

HARDY'S.

Enter MRS RACKETT *and* MISS OGLE.

Miss O. And so Miss Hardy is actually to be married to-night?

Mrs R. If her fate does not deceive her. You are apprised of the scheme, and we hope it will succeed.

Miss O. Deuce take her! she's six years younger than I am. [*Aside.*]—Is Mr Doricourt handsome?

Mrs R. Handsome, generous, young, and rich.—There's a husband for ye! Isn't he worth pulling caps for?

Miss O. I' my conscience, the widow speaks as though she'd give cap, ears, and all for him. [*Aside.*] I wonder you didn't try to catch this wonderful man, Mrs Rackett?

Mrs. R. Really, Miss Ogle, I had not time. Besides, when I marry, so many stout young fellows will hang themselves, that, out of regard to society, in these sad times, I shall postpone it for a few years,—This will cost her a new lace—I heard it crack.

[*Aside.*

Enter SIR GEORGE *and* LADY FRANCES.

Sir G. Well, here we are. But where's the Knight of the Woeful Countenance?

Mrs R. Here soon, I hope—for a woeful night it will be without him.

Sir G. Oh, fie! Do you condescend to pun?

Mrs R. Why not? It requires genius to make a good pun—some men of bright parts can't reach it, I know a lawyer, who writes them on the back of his briefs; and says they are of great use—in a dry cause.

Enter FLUTTER.

Flut. Here they come! Here they come!—Their coach stopped as mine drove off.

Lady Fran. Then Miss Hardy's fate is at a crisis.—She plays a hazardous game, and I tremble for her.

Sav. [*Without.*] Come, let me guide you!—This way, my poor friend! Why are you so furious?

Doric. [*Without*] The house of death—to the house of death!

Enter DORICOURT *and* SAVILLE.

Ah! this is the spot!

Lady F. How wild and fiery he looks!

Miss O. Now, I think, he looks terrified!

Flut. Poor creature, how his eyes work!

Mrs R. I never saw a madman before—let me examine him—will he bite?

Sav. Pray keep out of his reach, ladies—You don't know your danger. He's like a wild cat, if a sudden thought seizes him.

Mrs R. You talk like a keeper of wild cats—how much do you demand for showing the monster?

Doric. I don't like this—I must rouse their sensibility. There! there she darts through the air in liquid flames! Down again! Now I have her—Oh, she burns! she scorches!—Oh, she eats into my very heart!

Omnes. Ha! ha! ha!

Mrs R. He sees the apparition of the wicked Italian princess.

Flut. Keep her highness fast, Doricourt.

Miss O. Give her a pinch before you let her go.

Doric. I am laughed at!

Mrs R. Laughed at—ay, to be sure; why I could play the madman better than you. There! there she is! Now I have her! Ha! ha! ha!

Doric. I knew that devil would discover me. [*Aside.*] I'll leave the house:——I'm covered with confusion.

Sir G. Stay, sir—you must not go. 'Twas poorly done, Mr Doricourt, to affect madness, rather than fulfil your engagements.

Doric. Affect madness! Saville, what can I do?

Sav. Since you are discovered, confess the whole.

Miss O. Aye, turn evidence, and save yourself.

Doric. Yes; since m designs have been so unac-

countably discovered, I will avow the whole. I cannot love Miss Hardy—and I will never——

Sav. Hold, my dear Doricourt! be not so rash. What will the world say to such——

Doric. Damn the world! What will the world give me for the loss of happiness? Must I sacrifice my peace, to please the world?

Sir G. Yes, every thing, rather than be branded with dishonour.

Lady F. Though our arguments should fail, there is a pleader, whom you surely cannot withstand—the dying Mr Hardy supplicates you not to forsake his child.

Enter VILLERS.

Vill. Mr Hardy requests you to grant him a moment's conversation, Mr Doricourt, though you should persist to send him miserable to the grave. Let me conduct you to his chamber.

Doric. Oh, ay, any where; to the antipodes—to the moon—carry me—do with me what you will.

Mrs R. Mortification and disappointment, then, are specifics in a case of stubbornness—I'll follow, and let you know what passes.

[*Exeunt* VILLERS, DORICOURT, MRS RACKETT, *and* MISS OGLE.

Flut. Ladies, ladies, have the charity to take me with you, that I may make no blunder in repeating the story. [*Exit* FLUTTER.

Lady F. Sir George, you don't know Mr Saville. [*Exit* LADY FRANCES.

Sir G. Ten thousand pardons—but I will not pardon myself for not observing you. I have been with the utmost impatience at your door twice to-day.

Sav. I am concerned you had so much trouble, Sir George.

Sir G. Trouble! what a word!—I hardly know

how to address you! I am distressed beyond measure; and it is the highest proof of my opinion of your honour, and the delicacy of your mind, that I open my heart to you.

Sav. What has disturbed you, Sir George?

Sir G. Your having preserved Lady Frances in so imminent a danger—Start not, Saville; to protect Lady Frances was my right. You have wrested from me my dearest privilege.

Sav. I hardly know how to answer such a reproach. I cannot apologize for what I have done.

Sir G. I do not mean to reproach you, I hardly know what I mean. There is one method by which you may restore peace to me; I cannot endure that my wife should be so infinitely indebted to any man who is less than my brother.

Sav. Pray explain yourself.

Sir G. I have a sister, Saville, who is amiable: and you are worthy of her. I shall give her a commission to steal your heart, out of revenge for what you have done.

Sav. I am infinitely honoured, Sir George; but—

Sir G. I cannot listen to a sentence which begins with so unpromising a word. You must go with us into Hampshire; and, if you see each other with the eyes I do, your felicity will be complete. I know no one to whose heart I would so readily commit the care of my sister's happiness.

Sav. I will attend you to Hampshire with pleasure; but not on the plan of retirement. Society has claims on Lady Frances that forbid it.

Sir G. Claims, Saville!

Sav. Yes, claims; Lady Frances was born to be the ornament of courts. She is sufficiently alarmed, not to wander beyond the reach of her protector; and, from the British court, the most tenderly anxious husband could not wish to banish his wife. Bid her keep in her eye the bright example who presides

there; the splendour of whose rank yields to the superior lustre of her virtue.

Sir G. I allow the force of your argument. Now for intelligence.

Enter MRS RACKETT, LADY FRANCES, MISS OGLE, *and* FLUTTER.

Mrs R. Oh, Heavens! do you know——

Flut. Let me tell the story. As soon as Doricourt——

Mrs R. I protest you sha'n't—said Mr Hardy—

Flut. No, 'twas Doricourt spoke first—says he—No, 'twas the Parson—says he—

Mrs R. Stop his mouth, Sir George—he'll spoil the tale.

Sir G. Never heed circumstances—the result—the result.

Mrs R. No, no; you shall have it in form. Mr Hardy performed the sick man like an angel. He sat up in his bed, and talked so pathetically, that the tears stood in Doricourt's eyes.

Flut. Ay, stood—they did not drop, but stood. I shall in future be very exact: the parson seized the moment; you know they never miss an opportunity.

Mrs R. Make haste, said Doricourt; if I have time to reflect, poor Hardy will die unhappy.

Flut. They were got as far as the day of judgment, when we slipped out of the room.

Sir G. Then, by this time, they must have reached amazement, which, every body knows, is the end of matrimony.

Mrs R. Ay, the reverend fathers ended the service with that word, prophetically—to teach the bride what a capricious monster a husband is.

Sir G. I rather think it was sarcastically—to prepare the bridegroom for the unreasonable humours and vagaries of his helpmate.

Lady F. Here comes the bridegroom of to-night

Enter DORICOURT *and* VILLERS.—VILLERS *whispers* SAVILLE, *who goes out.*

Omnes. Joy! joy! joy!

Miss O. If he's a sample of bridegrooms, keep me single! A younger brother, from the funeral of his father, could not carry a more fretful countenance.

Flut. Oh! Now he's melancholy mad, I suppose.

Lady F. You do not consider the importance of the occasion.

Vill. No; nor how shocking a thing it is for a man to be forced to marry one woman whilst his heart is devoted to another.

Mrs R. Well, now 'tis over, I confess to you, Mr Doricourt, I think 'twas a most ridiculous piece of Quixotism, to give up the happiness of a whole life to a man who perhaps has but a few moments to be sensible of the sacrifice.

Flut. So it appeared to me. But, thought I, Mr Doricourt has travelled—he knows best.

Doric. Zounds! Confusion! Did ye not all set upon me? Didn't ye talk to me of honour—compassion—justice?

Sir G. Very true—You have acted according to their dictates, and I hope the utmost felicity of the married state will reward you.

Doric. Never, Sir George! To felicity I bid adieu—but I will endeavour to be content. Where is my—I must speak it—where is my wife?

Enter LETITIA, *masked, and led by* SAVILLE.

Sav. Mr Doricourt, this lady was pressing to be introduced to you.

Doric. Oh! [*Starting*

Letit. I told you last night you should see me at a time when you least expected me—and I have kept my promise.

Vill. Whoever you are, madam, you could not

have arrived at a happier moment. Mr Doricourt is just married.

Letit. Married! Impossible! 'Tis but a few hours since he swore to me eternal love: I believed him, gave him up my virgin heart—and now!——Ungrateful sex!

Doric. Your virgin heart! No, lady——my fate, thank Heaven! yet wants that torture. Nothing but the conviction that you was another's, could have made me think one moment of marriage, to have saved the lives of half mankind. But this visit, madam, is as barbarous as unexpected. It is now my duty to forget you, which, spite of your situation, I found difficult enough.

Letit. My situation! What situation?

Doric. I must apologize for explaining it in this company—but, madam, I am not ignorant that you are the companion of Lord George Jennett—and this is the only circumstance that can give me peace.

Letit. I—a companion! Ridiculous pretence! No, sir, know, to your confusion, that my heart, my honour, my name is as unspotted as hers you have married; my birth equal to your own, my fortune large. That, and my person, might have been yours. But, sir, farewell! [*Going.*

Doric. Oh, stay a moment—Rascal! is she not—

Flut. Who, she? O lord! no—'Twas quite a different person that I meant. I never saw that lady before.

Doric. Then never shalt thou see her more.

[*Shakes* FLUTTER.

Mrs R. Have mercy upon the poor man! Heavens! He'll murder him.

Doric. Murder him! Yes, you, myself, and all mankind. Sir George—Saville—Villers—'twas you who pushed me on this precipice; 'tis you who have snatched from me joy, felicity, and life.

Mrs R. There! Now, how well he acts the mad

man! this is something like! I knew he would do it well enough, when the time came.

Doric. Hard-hearted woman! enjoy my ruin—riot in my wretchedness. [HARDY *bursts in.*

Hardy. This is too much. You are now the husband of my daughter; and how dare you show all this passion about another woman?

Doric. Alive again!

Hardy. Alive! ay, and merry. Here, wipe off the flour from my face. I was never in better health and spirits in my life. I foresaw 'twould do. Why, my illness was only a fetch, man, to make you marry Letty.

Doric. It was! Base and ungenerous! well, sir, you shall be gratified. The possession of my heart was no object either with you or your daughter. My fortune and name were all you desired, and these—I leave ye. My native England I shall quit, nor ever behold you more. But, lady, that, in my exile, I may have one consolation, grant me the favour you denied last night;—let me behold all that mask conceals, that your whole image may be impressed on my heart, and cheer my distant solitary hours.

Letit. This is the most awful moment of my life. Oh, Doricourt, the slight action of taking off my mask stamps me the most blest or miserable of women!

Doric. What can this mean! Reveal your face, I conjure you.

Letit. Behold it.

Doric. Rapture! Transport! Heaven!

Flut. Now for a touch of the happy madman.

Letit. I will not allow that. This little stratagem arose from my disappointment in not having made the impression on you I wished. The timidity of the English character threw a veil over me you could not penetrate. You have forced me to emerge in

some measure from my natural reserve, and to throw off the veil that hid me.

Doric. I am yet in a state of intoxication—I cannot answer you.—Speak on, sweet angel!

Letit. You see I *can* be any thing; chuse then my character—your taste shall fix it. Shall I be an English wife?—or, breaking from the bonds of nature and education, step forth to the world in all the captivating glare of foreign manners?

Doric. You shall be nothing but yourself—nothing can be captivating that you are not. I will not wrong your penetration, by pretending that you won my heart at the first interview; but you have now my whole soul—your person, your face, your mind, I would not exchange for those of any other woman breathing.

Hardy. A dog! how well he makes up for past slights! Cousin Rackett, I wish you a good husband, with all my heart. Mr Flutter, I'll believe every word you say this fortnight. Mr Villers, you and I have managed this to a T. I never was so merry in my life—'Gad, I believe I can dance. [*Footing.*

Doric. Charming, charming creature!

Letit. Congratulate me, my dear friends! can you conceive my happiness?

Hardy. No, congratulate me; for mine is the greatest.

Flut. No, congratulate me, that I have escaped with life, and give me some sticking plaister—this wild cat has torn the skin from my throat.

Sir G. I expect to be among the first who are congratulated—for I have recovered one angel, while Doricourt has gained another.

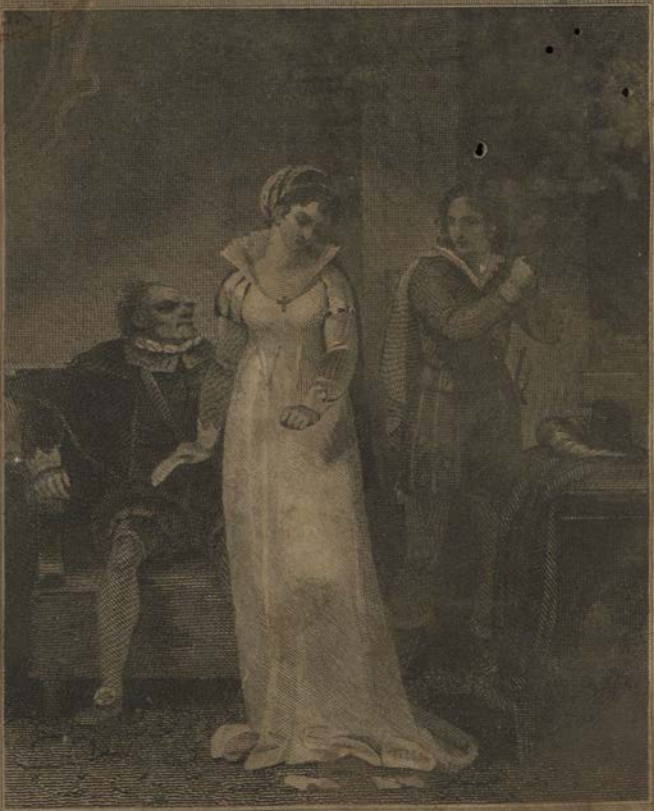
Hardy. Pho! pho! don't talk of angels, we shall be happier by half as mortals. Come into the next room; I have ordered out every drop of my forty-eight, and I'll invite the whole parish of St George's

but what we'll drink it out—except one dozen, which I shall keep under three double locks, for a certain christening, that I foresee will happen within this twelvemonth.

Doric. My charming bride! It was a strange perversion of taste, that led me to consider the delicate timidity of your deportment as the mark of an uninformed mind, or inelegant manners. I feel now it is to that innate modesty, *English* husbands owe a felicity the married men of other nations are strangers to; it is a sacred veil to your own charms; it is the surest bulwark to your husband's honour; and cursed be the hour—should it ever arrive—in which *British* ladies shall sacrifice to *foreign graces* the grace of modesty! [*Exeunt.*

THE END.

LOLD STROKE FOR A HUSBAND



VICTORIA — MY CHILDREN THEN ARE SAVED

ACT V. SCENE II.

PAINTED BY SINGLETON PUBLISHED BY LONGMAN & CO ENGRAVED BY ROMNEY

1807

A

BOLD STROKE FOR A HUSBAND;

A COMEDY,

IN FIVE ACTS;

BY MRS. COWLEY.

AS PERFORMED AT THE

THEATRE ROYAL, COVENT-GARDEN.

PRINTED UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF THE MANAGERS

FROM THE PROMPT BOOK.

WITH REMARKS

BY MRS. INCHBALD.

LONDON:

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REMARKS.

ALTHOUGH "The Bold Stroke for a Husband," by Mrs. Cowley, does not equal "The Bold Stroke for a Wife," by Mrs. Centlivre, either in originality of design, wit, or humour, it has other advantages more honourable to her sex, and more conducive to the reputation of the stage.

Here is contained no oblique insinuation, detrimental to the cause of morality—but entertainment and instruction unite, to make a pleasant exhibition at a theatre, or give an hour's amusement in the closet.

Plays, where the scene is placed in a foreign country, particularly when that country is Spain, have a license to present certain improbabilities to the audience, without incurring the danger of having them called such; and the authoress, by the skill with which she has used this dramatic permittance, in making the wife of Don Carlos pass for a man, has formed a most interesting plot, and embellished it with lively, humorous, and affecting incident.

Still there is another plot, of which Olivia is the heroine, as Victoria is of the foregoing; and this

more comic fable, in which the former is chiefly concerned, seems to have been the favourite story of the authoress, as from this she has taken her title.

But if Olivia makes a bold stroke to obtain a husband, surely Victoria makes a still bolder to preserve one; and there is something less honourable in the enterprises of a young maiden, in order to renounce her state, than in those of a married woman to avert the dangers that are impending over hers.

Whichever of those females becomes the most admired object with the reader, he will not be insensible to the trials of the other, or to the various interests of the whole Dramatis Personæ, to whom the writer has artfully given a kind of united influence; and upon a happy combination it is, that, sometimes, the success of a drama more depends than upon the most powerful support of any particular prominent, yet insulated, character.

The part of Don Vincentio was certainly meant as a moral satire upon the extravagant love, or the foolish affectation of pretending to love, to extravagance —music. This satire was aimed at so many, that the shaft struck none. The charm of music still prevails in England, and the folly of affected admirers.

Vincentio talks music, and Don Julio speaks poetry. Such, at least, is his fond description of his mistress Olivia, in that excellent scene in the third act, where she first takes off her veil, and fascinates him at once by the force of her beauty.

In the delineation of this lady, it is implied that she is no termagant, although she so frequently counterfeits the character. This insinuation, the reader, if he pleases, may trust—but the man who would venture to marry a good impostor of this kind, could not excite much pity, if his helpmate was often induced to act the part which she had heretofore, with so much spirit, assumed.

The impropriety of making fraud and imposition necessary evils, to counteract tyranny and injustice, is the fault of all Spanish dramas—and perhaps the only one which attaches to the present comedy.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

DON CÆSAR	*Mr. Munden.*
DON JULIO	*Mr. Lewis.*
DON CARLOS	*Mr. Cooke.*
DON VINCENTIO	*Mr. Fawcett.*
DON GARCIA	*Mr. Brunton.*
DON VASQUEZ	*Mr. Simmons.*
GASPER	*Mr. Blanchard.*
PEDRO	*Mr. Harley.*
DONNA OLIVIA	*Mrs. Glover.*
DONNA VICTORIA	*Mrs. Litchfield.*
DONNA LAURA	*Mrs. Dibdin.*
MINETTE	*Mrs. Gibbs.*
MARCELLA	*Miss Waddy.*
SANCHA	*Mrs. Whitmore.*
INIS	*Mrs. Beverly.*

SCENE,—Spain.

BOLD STROKE FOR A HUSBAND.

ACT THE FIRST.

SCENE I.

A Street in Madrid.

Enter SANCHA *from a House; she advances, then runs back, and beckons to* PEDRO *within.*

San. Hist! Pedro! Pedro!

Enter PEDRO.

There he is: dost see him? just turning by St. Anthony, in the corner. Now, do you tell him that your mistress is not at home; and if his jealous donship should insist on searching the house, as he did yesterday, say that somebody is ill—the black has got a fever, or that——

Ped. Pho, pho, get you in. Don't I know that the duty of a lacquey in Madrid is to lie with a good grace? I have been studying it now for a whole week, and I'll defy don or devil to surprise me into a truth. Get you in, I say—here he comes. [*Exit* SANCHA.

Enter CARLOS.

[PEDRO *struts up to him.*] Donna Laura is not at home, sir.

Car. Not at home!—Come, sir, what have you received for telling that lie?

Ped. Lie!—Lie!—Signior!—

Car. It must be a lie, by your promptness in delivering it.—What a fool does your mistress trust!—A clever rascal would have waited my approach, and, delivering the message with easy coolness, deceived me—*thou* hast been on the watch, and runnest towards me with a face of stupid importance, bawling that she may hear through the lattice how well thou obeyest her,—"Donna Laura is not at home, sir."

Ped. Hear through the lattice—hah! by'r lady, she must have long ears, to reach from the grotto in the garden to the street.

Car. Hah! [*Seizes him.*] Now, sir, your ears shall be longer, if you do not tell me who is with her in the grotto.

Ped. In the grotto, sir!—Did I say any thing about the grotto? I——I only meant that——

Car. Fool!—Dost thou trifle with me? Who is with her? [*Pinching his ear.*

Ped. Oh!—why, nobody, sir—only the pretty young gentleman's valet, waiting for an answer to a letter he brought. There! I have saved my ears at the expense of my place. I have worn this fine coat but a week, and I shall be sent back to Segovia for not being able to lie, though I have been learning the art six days and nights.

Car. Well—come this way—if thou wilt promise to be faithful to me, I will not betray thee, nor at present enter the house.

Ped. Oh, sir, blessings on you!

Car. How often does the pretty young gentleman visit her?

Ped. Every day, sir—If he misses, madam's stark wild.

Car. Where does he live?

Ped. Truly, I know not, sir.

Car. How! [*Menacing.*

Ped. By the honesty of my mother, I cannot tell, sir. She calls him Florio;—that's his christian name—his heathen name I never heard.

Car. You must acquaint me when they are next together.

Ped. Lord, sir, if there should be any blood spilt!

Car. Promise,—or I'll lead thee by the ears to the grotto.

Ped. I promise, I promise.

Car. There, take that, [*Gives money.*] and if thou art faithful, I'll treble it. Now go in, and be a good lad—and, d'ye hear?—you may tell lies to every body else, but remember you must always speak truth to me.

Ped. I will, sir,—I will.

[*Exit looking at the money.*

Car. 'Tis well my passion is extinguished, for I can now act with coolness; I'll wait patiently for the hour of their security, and take them in the softest moments of their love. But if ever I trust to woman more—may every——

Enter two WOMEN, *veiled, followed by* JULIO.

Julio. Fie, ladies! keep your curtains drawn so late! The sun is up—'tis time to look abroad—[*Tries to remove the veils.*] Nay, if you are determined on night and silence, I take my leave. A woman without prattle, is like Burgundy without spirit.—Bright eyes, to touch me, must belong to sweet tongues.

[*Going.*

Car. Sure 'tis Julio.—Hev!

Julio. [*Returning.*] Don Carlos? Yes, by all the sober gods of matrimony!—Why, what business, goodman gravity, canst thou have in Madrid—I understand you are married—quietly settled in your own pastures—father of a family, and the instructive companion of country vine-dressers—ha! ha!

Car. 'Tis false, by heaven!—I have forsworn the country—left my family, and run away from my wife.

Julio. Really! then matrimony has not totally destroyed thy free will.

Car. 'Tis with difficulty I have preserved it though; for women, thou knowest, are most unreasonable beings! As soon as I had exhausted my stock of love tales, which, with management, lasted beyond the honey-moon, madam grew sullen,—I found home dull, and amused myself with the pretty peasants of the neighbourhood——Worse and worse!—we had nothing now but faintings, tears, and hysterics for twenty-four honey-moons more.—So one morning I gave her in her sleep a farewell kiss, to comfort her when she should awake, and posted to Madrid; where, if it was not for the remembrance of the clog at my heel, I should bound o'er the regions of pleasure with more spirit than a young Arabian on his mountains.

Julio. Do you find this clog no hindrance in affairs of gallantry?

Car. Not much.—In that house there—but, damn her, she's perfidious!—in that house is a woman of beauty, with pretensions to character and fortune, who devoted herself to my passion.

Julio. If she's perfidious, give her to the winds.

Car. Ah, but there is a rub, Julio; I have been a fool—a woman's fool!—In a state of intoxication, she wheedled me, or rather cheated me, out of a settlement.

Julio. Pho! is that——

Car. Oh! but you know not its nature. A settlement of lands, that both honour and gratitude ought to have preserved sacred from such base alienation. In short, if I cannot recover them, I am a ruined man.

Julio. Nay, this seems a worse clog than t'other —Poor Carlos! so bewived and be——

Car. Prythee, have compassion.

Enter a SERVANT, *with a letter to* JULIO; *he reads it, and then nods to the* SERVANT, *who exits*

Car. An appointment, I'll be sworn, by that air of mystery and satisfaction—come, be friendly, and communicate.

Julio. [*Putting up the letter.*] You are married, Carlos;—that's all I have to say—you are married.

Car. Pho! that's past long ago, and ought to be forgotten; but if a man does a foolish thing once, he'll hear of it all his life.

Julio. Ay, the time has been when thou might'st have been entrusted with such a dear secret,—when I might have opened the billet, and feasted thee with the sweet meandering strokes at the bottom, which form her name, when——

Car. What, 'tis from a woman then?

Julio. It is.

Car. Handsome?

Julio. Hum—not absolutely handsome, but she'll pass, with one who has not had his taste spoiled by —matrimony.

Car. Malicious dog!—Is she young?

Julio. Under twenty—fair complexion, azure eyes, red lips, teeth of pearl, polished neck, fine-turned shape, graceful——

Car. Hold, Julio, if thou lov'st me!—Is it possible she can be so bewitching a creature?

Julio. 'Tis possible—though, to deal plainly, I

never saw her; but I love my own pleasure so well, that I could fancy all that, and ten times more.

Car. What star does she inhabit?

Julio. 'Faith, I know not; my orders are to be in waiting, at seven, at the Prado.

Car. Prado!—hey!—gad! can't you take me with you? for though I have forsworn the sex myself, and have done with them for ever, yet I may be of use to you, you know.

Julio. 'Faith, I can't see that—however, as you are a poor wo-begone married mortal, I'll have compassion, and suffer thee to come.

Car. Then I am a man again! Wife, avaunt! mistress, farewell!—At seven, you say?

Julio. Exactly.

Car. I'll meet thee at Philippi! [*Exeunt, severally.*

SCENE II.

A spacious Garden belonging to DON CÆSAR.

Enter MINETTE *and* INIS.

Min. There, will that do? My lady sent me to make her up a nosegay; these orange flowers are delicious, and this rose, how sweet!

Inis. Pho! what signifies wearing sweets in her bosom, unless they would sweeten her manners?—'Tis amazing you can be so much at your ease; one might think your lady's tongue was a lute, and her morning scolds an agreeable serenade.

Min. So they are—Custom, you know. I have been used to her music now these two years, and I don't believe I could relish my breakfast without it.

Inis. I would rather never break my fast, than do

it on such terms. What a difference between your mistress and mine! Donna Victoria is as much too gentle, as her cousin is too harsh.

Min. Ay, and you see what she gets by it; had she been more spirited, perhaps her husband would not have forsaken her;—men enlisted under the matrimonial banner, like those under the king's, would be often tempted to run away from their colours, if fear did not keep them in dread of desertion.

Inis. If making a husband afraid is the way to keep him faithful, I believe your lady will be the happiest wife in Spain.

Min. Ha! ha! ha! how people may be deceived! —nay, how people are deceived!—But time will discover all things.

Inis. What! what, is there a secret in the business, Minette? If there is, hang time! let's have it directly.

Min. Now, if I dared but tell ye—lud! lud! how I could surprise ye!— [*Going.*

Inis. [*Stopping her.*] Don't go.

Min. I must go; I am on the very brink of betraying my mistress—I must leave you—mercy upon me! it rises like new bread.

Inis. I hope it will choke ye, if ye stir till I know all.

Min. Will you never breathe a syllable?

Inis. Never.

Min. Will you strive to forget it the moment you have heard it?

Inis. I'll swear to myself forty times a-day to forget it.

Min. You are sure you will not let me stir from this spot till you know the whole?

Inis. Not as far as a thrush hops.

Min. So! now, then, in one word,—here it goes. Though every body supposes my lady an arrant scold, she's no more a—— [*Looking out.*

Don Cæsar. [*Without.*] Out upon't! e—h—h!

Min. Oh, St. Jerome!—here is her father and his privy counsellor, Gasper. I can never communicate a secret in quiet. Well! come to my chamber, for, now my hand's in, you shall have the whole.—I would not keep it another day, to be confidante to an infanta. [*Exeunt.*

Enter DON CÆSAR *and* GASPER.

Gasp. Take comfort, sir; take comfort.

Cæsar. Take it!—why, where the devil shall I find it? You may say, take physic, sir, or take poison, sir——they are to be had; but what signifies bidding me take comfort, when I can neither buy it, beg it, nor steal it?

Gasp. But patience will bring it, sir.

Cæsar. 'Tis false, sirrah.—Patience is a cheat, and the man that ranked her with the cardinal virtues was a fool.—I have had patience at bed and board these three long years, but the comfort she promised has never called in with a civil how d'ye.

Gasp. Ay, sir, but you know the poets say that the twin sister and companion of comfort is good-humour.—Now, if you would but drop that agreeable acidity, which is so conspicuous—

Cæsar. Then let my daughter drop her perverse humour; 'tis a more certain bar to marriage than ugliness or folly; and will send me to my grave at last, without male heirs. [*Crying.*] How many have laid siege to her! But that humour of hers, like the works of Gibraltar, no Spaniard can find pregnable.

Gasp. Ay, well—Troy held out but ten years—— Let her once tell over her beads, unmarried, at five-and-twenty, and, my life upon it, she ends the rosary, with a hearty prayer for a good husband.

Cæsar. What, d'ye expect me to wait till the horrors of old maidenism frighten her into civility? No, no;—I'll shut her up in a convent, marry myself,

and have heirs in spite of her. There's my neighbour Don Vasquez's daughter, she is but nineteen——

Gasp. The very step I was going to recommend, sir. You are but a young gentleman of sixty-three, I take it; and a husband of sixty-three, who marries a wife of nineteen, will never want heirs, take my word for it.

Cæsar. What! do you joke, sirrah?

Gasp. Oh, no, sir—not if you are serious. I think it would be one of the pleasantest things in the world—Madam would throw a new life into the family; and when you are above stairs in the gout, sir, the music of her concerts, and the spirit of her converzationes, would reach your sick bed, and be a thousand times more comforting than flannels and panada.

Cæsar. Come, come, I understand ye.—But this daughter of mine—I shall give her but two chances more.——Don Garcia and Don Vincentio will both be here to-day, and if she plays over the old game, I'll marry to-morrow morning, if I hang myself the next.

Gasp. You decide right, signior; at sixty-three the marriage noose and the hempen noose should always go together.

Cæsar. Why, you dog you, do you suppose—There's Don Garcia—there he is, coming through the portico. Run to my daughter, and bid her remember what I have said to her. [*Exit* GASPER.] She has had her lesson—but another memento mayn't be amiss—a young slut!—pretty, and witty, and rich—a match for a prince, and yet—but hist!—— Not a word to my young man; if I can but keep him in ignorance till he is married, he must make the best of his bargain afterwards, as other honest men have done before him.

Enter GARCIA.

Welcome, Don Garcia!—why, you are rather before your time.

Gar. Gallantry forbid that I should not, when a fair lady is concerned. Should Donna Olivia welcome me as frankly as you do, I shall think I have been tardy.

Cæsar. When you made your overtures, signior, I understood it was from inclination to be allied to my family, not from a particular passion to my daughter. Have you ever seen her?

Gar. But once—that transiently—yet sufficient to convince me that she is charming.

Cæsar. Why, yes, though I say it, there are few prettier women in Madrid; and she has got enemies amongst her own sex accordingly. They pretend to say that——I say, sir, they have reported that she is not blessed with that kind of docility and gentleness that a——now, though she may not be so very placid, and insipid, as some young women, yet, upon the whole—

Gar. Oh, fie, sir!—not a word—A beauty cannot be ill-tempered; gratified vanity keeps her in good humour with herself, and every body about her.

Cæsar. Yes, as you say—vanity is a prodigious sweetener; and Olivia, considering how much she has been humoured, is as gentle and pliant as—

Enter MINETTE.

Min. Oh, sir! shield me from my mistress—She is in one of her old tempers—the whole house is in an uproar.—I cannot support it!

Cæsar. Hush!

Min. No, sir, I can't hush—A saint could not bear it. I am tired of her tyranny, and must quit her service.

Cæsar. Then quit it in a moment—go to my steward, and receive your wages—go—begone! 'Tis a cousin of my daughter's she is speaking of.

Min. A cousin, sir!—No, 'tis Donna Olivia, your daughter—my mistress. Oh, sir! you seem to be a sweet tender-hearted, young gentleman—'twould move you to pity if—— [*To* GARCIA.

Cæsar. I'll move you, hussy, to some purpose, if you don't move off.

Gar. I am really confounded—can the charming Olivia—

Cæsar. Spite, sir—mere malice! My daughter has refused her some cast gown, or some—

Olivia. [*Without.*] Where is she?—Where is Minette?

Cæsar. Oh, 'tis all over!—the tempest is coming.

Enter OLIVIA.

Oliv. Oh, you vile creature!—to speak to me!—to answer me!—am I made to be answered?

Cæsar. Daughter! daughter!

Oliv. Because I threw my work-bag at her, she had the insolence to complain; and, on my repeating it, said she would not bear it.—Servants choose what they shall bear!

Min. When you are married, ma'am, I hope your husband will bear your humour less patiently than I have done.

Oliv. My husband!—dost think my husband shall contradict my will? Oh, I long to set a pattern to those milky wives, whose mean compliances degrade the sex.

Gar. Opportune! [*Aside.*

Oliv. The only husband on record who knew how to treat a wife was Socrates; and though his lady was a Grecian, I have some reason to believe her

descendants matched into our family; and never shall my tame submission disgrace my ancestry.

Gar. Heavens! why have you never curbed this intemperate spirit, Don Cæsar?

Oliv. [*Starting.*] Curbed, sir! talk thus to your groom—curbs and bridles for a woman's tongue!

Gar. Not for yours, lady, truly! 'tis too late. But had the torrent, now so overbearing, been taken at its spring, it might have been stemmed, and turned in gentle streamlets at the master's pleasure.

Oliv. A mistake, friend!—my spirit, at its spring, was too powerful for any master.

Gar. Indeed!—perhaps you may meet a Petruchio, gentle Catherine, yet.

Oliv. But no gentle Catherine will he find me, believe it.—Catherine! why, she had not the spirit of a roasted chesnut—a few big words, an empty oath, and a scanty dinner, made her as submissive as a spaniel. My fire will not be so soon extinguished—it shall resist big words, oaths and starving.

Min. I believe so, indeed; help the poor gentleman, I say, to whose fate you fall!

Gar. Don Cæsar, adieu! My commiseration for your fate subdues the resentment I should otherwise feel at your endeavouring to deceive me into such a marriage.

Oliv. Marriage! oh, mercy!—Is this Don Garcia? [*Apart to* CÆSAR.

Cæsar. Yes, termagant!

Oliv. O, what a misfortune! Why did you not tell me it was the gentleman you designed to marry me to?—Oh, sir! all that is past was in sport; a contrivance between my maid and me: I have no spirit at all—I am as patient as poverty.

Gar. This mask fits too ill on your features fair lady: I have seen you without disguise, and rejoice in your ignorance of my name, since, but for that

my peaceful home might have become the seat of perpetual discord.

Min. Ay, sir, you would never have known what a quiet hour——

Oliv. [*Strikes her.*] Impertinence!—Indeed, sir, I can be as gentle and forbearing as a pet lamb.

Gar. I cannot doubt it, madam; the proofs of your placidity are very striking—But, adieu; though I shall pray for your conversion, rather than have the honour of it—I'd turn Dominican, and condemn myself to perpetual celibacy. [*Exit.*

Cæsar. Now, hussy!—now, hussy!—what do you expect?

Oliv. Dear me! how can you be so unreasonable! did ever daughter do more to oblige a father? I absolutely begged the man to have me.

Cæsar. Yes, vixen! after you had made him detest ye; what, I suppose, he had not hit your fancy, madam; though there is not, in all Spain, a man of prettier conversation.

Oliv. Yes, he has a very pretty kind of conversation; 'tis like a parenthesis

Cæsar. Like a parenthesis!

Oliv. Yes, it might be all left out and never missed. However, I thought him a modest kind of a well-meaning young man, and that he would make a pretty sort of a husband—for, notwithstanding his bluster-ing, had I been his wife, in three months he should have been as humble and complaisant as——

Cæsar. Ay, there it is—there it is!—that spirit of yours, hussy, you can neither conquer nor conceal: but I'll find a way to tame it, I'll warrant me. [*Exit.*

[OLIVIA *and* MINETTE *follow him with their eyes, and then burst into a laugh.*

Min. Well, madam, I give you joy! had other ladies as much success in getting lovers, as you have in getting rid of yours, what contented faces we should see!

Oliv. But to what purpose do I get rid of them, whilst they rise in succession like monthly pinks? Was there ever any thing so provoking?—After some quiet, and believing the men had ceased to trouble themselves about me, no less than two proposals have been made to my inexorable father this very day—What will become of me?

Min. What should become of you? You'll choose one from the pair, I hope. Believe me, madam, the only way to get rid of the impertinence of lovers, is to take one, and make him a scarecrow to the rest.

Oliv. Oh, but I cannot!—Invention assist me this one day!

Min. Upon my word, madam, invention owes you nothing; and I am afraid you can draw on that bank no longer.—You must trust to your established character of vixen.

Oliv. But that won't frighten them all, you know, though it did its business with sober Don Garcia. The brave General Antonio would have made a property of me, in spite of every thing, had I not luckily discovered his antipathy to eats, and so scared the hero, by pretending an immoderate passion for young kittens.

Min. Yes, but you was still harder pushed by the Castilian Count, and his engraved genealogy from Noah.

Oliv. Oh, he would have kept his post as immovably as the griffins at his gate, had I not very seriously imparted to him, that my mother's great uncle sold oranges in Arragon.

Min. And pray, madam, if I may be so bold, who is the next gentleman?

Oliv. Oh, Don Vincentio, who distracts every body with his skill in music. He ought to be married to a Viol de Gamba. I bless my stars I have never yet had a miser in my list—on such a character

all art would be lost, and nothing but an earthquake, to swallow up my estate, could save me.

Min. Well, if some one did but know, how happy would some one be, that for his sake——

Oliv. Now, don't be impertinent, Minette. You have several times attempted to slide yourself into a secret, which I am resolved to keep to myself. Continue faithful, and suppress your curiosity. [*Exit.*

Min. Suppress my curiosity, madam!—why, I am a chambermaid, and a sorry one too, it should seem, to have been in your confidence two years, and never have got the master-secret yet. I never was six weeks in a family before but I knew every secret they had in it for three generations; ay, and I'll know this too, or I'll blow up all her plans, and declare to the world, that she is no more a vixen than other fine ladies—they have most of them a touch on't. [*Exit.*

ACT THE SECOND.

SCENE I.

An Apartment at DONNA LAURA'S.

Enter LAURA, *followed by* CARLOS.

Car. Nay, madam, you may as well stop here, for I'll follow you through every apartment, but I will be heard. [*Seizing her hand.*

Laura. This insolence is not to be endured; within my own walls, to be thus——

Car. The time has been, when within your walls I might be master.

Laura. Yes, you were then master of my heart; that gave you a right which——

Car. You have now transferred to another.

[*Flinging away her hand.*

Laura. Well, sir!

Car. "Well, sir!"—Unblushing acknowledgment! False, fickle woman!

Laura. Because I have luckily got the start of you; in a few weeks I should have been the accuser, and you the false and fickle.

Car. And, to secure yourself from that disgrace, you prudently looked out in time for another lover.

Laura. I can pardon your sneer, because you are mortified.

Car. Mortified!

Laura. Yes, mortified to the soul, Carlos!

Car. [*Stamping.*] Madam! madam!

Laura. This rage would have been all cool insolence, had I waited for your change—Scarcely would you have deigned to form a phrase of pity for me; perhaps have bid me forget a man no longer worthy my attachment, and recommended me to hartshorn and my woman.

Car. Has any hour, since I have first known you, given you cause for such unjust——

Laura. Yes, every hour—Now, Carlos, I bring thee to the test!—You saw, you liked, you loved me; was there no fond trusting woman whom you deserted to indulge the transient passion? Yes, one blessed with beauty, gentleness, and youth; one, who more than her own being loved thee, who made thee rich, and whom thou madest thy wife.

Car. My wife!—here's a turn! So to revenge the quarrels of my wife——

Laura. No, do not mistake me—what I have done was merely to indulge myself, without more regard to your feelings, than you had to hers.

Car. And you dare avow to my face, that you have a passion for another?

Laura. I do, and—for I am above disguise, I confess; so tender is my love for Florio, it has scarcely left a trace of that I once avowed for Carlos.

Car. Well, madam, if I hear this without some sudden vengeance on the tongue which speaks it, thank the annihilation of that passion, whose remembrance is as dead in my bosom as in yours. Let us, however, part friends, and with a mutual acquittal of every obligation—so give up the settlement of that estate, which left me almost a beggar.

Laura. Give it up!—ha! ha!——no, Carlos, you consigned me that estate as a proof of love; do not imagine, then, I'll give up the only part of our connexion of which I am not ashamed.

Car. Base woman! you know 'twas not a voluntary gift—after having in vain practised on my fondness, whilst in a state of intoxication, you prevailed on me to sign the deed, which you had artfully prepared for the purpose—therefore, you must restore it.

Laura. Never, never.

Car. Ruin is in the word!—Call it back, madam, or I'll be revenged on thee in thy heart's dearest object—thy minion Florio!——*he* shall not riot on my fortune.

Laura. Ha! ha! ha! Florio is safe—your lands are sold, and in another country we shall enjoy the blessing of thy fond passion, whilst that passion is indulging itself in hatred and execrations. [*Exit.*

Car. My vengeance shall first fall on her. [*Following.*] No, he shall be the first victim, or 'twill be incomplete.—Reduced to poverty, I cannot live.——Oh, folly! where are now all the gilded prospects of my youth? Had I——but 'tis too late to look back, —remorse attends the past, and ruin—ruin waits me in the future!

SCENE II.

DON CÆSAR'S.

VICTORIA *enters, perusing a letter; enter* OLIVIA.

Oliv. [*Speaks as entering.*] If my father should inquire for me, tell him I am in Donna Victoria's apartment.—Smiling, I protest! my dear gloomy cousin, where have you purchased that sun-shiny look?

Vict. It is but April sun-shine, I fear; but who could resist such a temptation to smile? a letter from Donna Laura, my husband's mistress, styling me her dearest Florio! her life! her soul! and complaining of a twelve hours absence, as the bitterest misfortune.

Oliv. Ha! ha! ha! most doughty Don! pray, let us see you in your feather and doublet; as a Cavaliero, it seems, you are formidable. So suddenly to rob your husband of his charmer's heart! you must have used some witchery.

Vict. Yes, powerful witchery—the knowledge of my sex. Oh! did the men but know us, as well as we do ourselves;—but, thank fate, they do *not*—'twould be dangerous.

Oliv. What, I suppose, you praised her understanding, was captivated by her wit, and absolutely struck dumb by the amazing beauties of—her mind.

Vict. Oh, no—that's the mode prescribed by the essayists on the female heart—ha! ha! ha!—Not a woman breathing, from fifteen to fifty, but would

rather have a compliment to the tip of her ear, or the turn of her ancle, than a volume in praise of her intellects.

Oltv. So, flattery, then, is your boasted pill?

Vict. No, that's only the occasional gilding; but 'tis in vain to attempt a description of what changed its nature with every moment. I was now attentive —now gay—then tender, then careless. I strove rather to convince her that I was charming, than that I myself was charmed; and when I saw love's arrow quivering in her heart, instead of falling at her feet, sung a triumphant air, and remembered a sudden engagement.

Oliv. [*Archly.*] Would you have done so, had you been a man?

Vict. Assuredly—knowing what I now do as a woman.

Oliv. But can all this be worth while, merely to rival a fickle husband with one woman, whilst he is setting his feather, perhaps, at half a score others?

Vict. To rival him was not my first motive. The Portuguese robbed me of his heart; I concluded she had fascinations which nature had denied to me; it was impossible to visit her as a woman; I, therefore, assumed the cavalier to study her, that I might, if possible, be to my Carlos, all he found in her.

Oliv. Pretty humble creature!

Vict. In this adventure I learnt more than I expected;—my (oh, cruel!) my husband has given this woman an estate, almost all that his dissipations had left us.

Oliv. Indeed!

Vict. To make him more culpable, it was my estate; it was that fortune which my lavish love had made his, without securing it to my children.

Oliv. How could you be so improvident?

Vict. Alas! I trusted him with my heart, with

my happiness, without restriction. Should I have shown a greater solicitude for any thing than for these?

Oliv. The event proves that you should; but how can you be thus passive in your sorrow? since I had assumed the man, I'd make him feel a man's resentment for such injuries.

Vict. Oh, Olivia! what resentment can I show to him I have vowed to honour, and whom both my duty and my heart compel me yet to love?

Oliv. Why, really now, I think—positively, there's no thinking about it; 'tis among the arcana of the married life, I suppose.

Vict. You, who know me, can judge how I suffered in prosecuting my plan. I have thrown off the delicacy of sex; I have worn the mask of love to the destroyer of my peace—but the object is too great to be abandoned—nothing less than to save my husband from ruin, and to restore him, again a lover, to my faithful bosom.

Oliv. Well, I confess, Victoria, I hardly know whether most to blame or praise you; but, with the rest of the world, I suppose, your success will determine me.

Enter GASPER.

Gasp. Pray, madam, are your wedding shoes ready? [*To* OLIVIA.

Oliv. Insolence!——I can scarcely ever keep up the vixen to this fellow. [*Apart to* VICTORIA.

Gasp. You'll want them, ma'am, to-morrow morning, that's all—so I came to prepare ye.

Oliv. I want wedding-shoes to-morrow! If you are kept on water gruel till I marry, that plump face of yours will be chap-fallen, I believe.

Gasp. Yes, truly, I believe so too. Lack-a-day, did you suppose I came to bring you news of your

own wedding? no such glad tidings for you, lady, believe me.—You married! I am sure the man who ties himself to you, ought to be half a salamander, and able to live on fire.

Oliv. What marriage, then, is it you do me the honour to inform me of?

Gasp. Why, your father's marriage. You'll have a mother-in-law to-morrow, and having, like a dutiful daughter, danced at the wedding, be immured in a convent for life.

Oliv. Immured in a convent! then I'll raise sedition in the sisterhood, depose the abbess, and turn the confessor's chair to a go-cart.

Gasp. So, the threat of the mother-in-law, which I thought would be worse than that of the abbess, does not frighten ye?

Oliv. No, because my father dares not give me one.—Marry, without my consent! no, no, he'll never think of it, depend on't; however, lest the fit should grow strong upon him, I'll go and administer my volatiles to keep it under. [*Exit.*

Gasp. Administer them cautiously then; too strong a dose of your volatiles would make the fit stubborn. Who'd think that pretty arch look belonged to a termagant? what a pity! 'twould be worth a thousand ducats to cure her.

Vict. Has Inis told you I wanted to converse with you in private, Gasper?

Gasp. Oh, yes, madam, and I took particular notice, that it was to be in private——Sure, says I, Mrs. Inis, Madam Victoria has not taken a fancy to me, and is going to break her mind.

Vict. Whimsical! ha! ha! suppose I should, Gasper?

Gasp. Why, then, madam, I should say, fortune had used you devilish scurvily, to give you a grey-beard in a livery. I know well enough, that some young ladies have given themselves to grey-beards

in a gilded coach, and others have run away with a handsome youth in worsted lace; they each had their apology; but if you run away with me—pardon me, madam, I could not stand the ridicule.

Vict. Oh, very well, but if you refuse to run away with me, will you do me another favour?

Gasp. Any thing you'll order, madam, except dancing a fandango.

Vict. You have seen my rich old uncle in the country?

Gasp. What, Don Sancho, who, with two-thirds of a century in his face, affects the misdemeanors of youth; hides his baldness with amber locks, and complains of the tooth-ach, to make you believe that the two rows of ivory he carries in his head grew there.

Vict. Oh, you know him, I find; could you assume his character for an hour, and make love for him? you know, it must be in the style of King Roderigo the First.

Gasp. Hang it! I am rather too near his own age; to appear an old man with effect, one should not be above twenty; 'tis always so on the stage.

Vict. Pho! you might pass for Juan's grandson.

Gasp. Nay, if your ladyship condescends to flatter me, you have me.

Vict. Then follow me; for Don Cæsar, I hear, is approaching—in the garden I'll make you acquainted with my plan, and impress on your mind every trait of my uncle's character. If you can hit him off, the arts of Laura shall be foiled, and Carlos be again Victoria's. [*Exeunt.*

Enter DON CÆSAR, *followed by* OLIVIA.

Cæsar. No, no, 'tis too late—no coaxings; I am resolved, I say.

Oliv. But it is not too late, and you shan't be resolved, I say. Indeed, now, I'll be upon my guard

with the next Don—what's his name? not a trace of the Xantippe left—I'll study to be charming.

Cæsar. Nay, you need not study it, you are always charming enough, if you would but hold your tongue.

Oliv. Do you think so? then to the next lover I won't open my lips; I'll answer every thing he says with a smile, and if he asks me to have him, drop a courtesy of thankfulness.

Cæsar. Pshaw! that's too much t'other way; you are always either above the mark or below it; you must talk, but talk with good humour. Can't you look gently and prettily, now, as I do? and say, yes, sir, and no, sir; and 'tis very fine weather, sir; and, pray, sir, were you at the ball last night? and, I caught a sad cold the other evening; and, bless me! I hear Lucinda has run away with her footman, and Don Philip has married his housemaid.——That's the way agreeable ladies talk, you never hear any thing else.

Oliv. Very true; and you shall see me as agreeable as the best of them, if you won't give me a mother-in-law to snub me, and set me tasks, and to take up all the fine apartments, and send up poor little Livy to lodge next the stars.

Cæsar. Ha! if thou wert but always thus soft and good-humoured, no mother-in-law in Spain, though she brought the Castiles for her portion, should have power to snub thee. But, Livy, the trial's at hand, for at this moment do I expect Don Vincentio to visit you. He is but just returned from England and, probably, has yet heard only of your beauty and fortune; I hope it is not from you he will learn the other part of your character.

Oliv. This moment expect him! two new lovers in a day!

Cæsar. Beginning already, as I hope to live! ay, I see 'tis in vain; I'll send him an excuse, and marry Marcella before night.

Oliv. Oh, no! upon my obedience, I promise to be just the soft, civil creature, you have described.

Enter a SERVANT.

Serv. Don Vincentio is below, sir.

Cæsar. I'll wait upon him——well, go and collect all your smiles and your simpers, and remember all I have said to you;—be gentle, and talk pretty little small talk, d'ye hear? and if you please him, you shall have the portion of a Dutch burgomaster's daughter, and the pin-money of a princess, you jade you.—I think at last, I have done it; the fear of this mother-in-law will keep down the fiend in her, if any thing can. [*Exit.*

Oliv. Hah! my poor father, your anxieties will never end till you bring Don Julio. But what shall I do with this Vincentio?—I fear he is so perfectly harmonized, that to put him in an ill temper will be impracticable.—I must try, however; if 'tis possible to find a discord in him, I'll touch the string. [*Exit.*

SCENE III.

Another Apartment.

Enter VINCENTIO *and* CÆSAR.

Vin. Presto, presto, signor! where is the Olivia?—not a moment to spare. I left off in all the fury of composition; minums and crotchets have been battling it through my head the whole day, and trying a semibreve in G sharp has made me as flat as double F.

Cæsar. Sharp and flat!—trying a semibreve!—oh—gad, sir! I had like not to have understood you! but a semibreve is something of a demi-culverin, I take it; and you have been practising the art military.

Vin. Art military!—what, sir! are you unacquainted with music?

Cæsar. Music! oh! I ask pardon; then you are fond of music——'ware of discords! [*Aside.*

Vin. Fond of it! devoted to it.—I composed a thing to-day, in all the gusto of Sacchini and the sweetness of Gluck. But this recreant finger fails me in composing a passage in E octave: if it does not gain more elastic vigour in a week, I shall be tempted to have it amputated, and supply the shake with a spring.

Cæsar. Mercy! amputate a finger to supply a shake!

Vin. Oh, that's a trifle in the road to reputation—to be talked of is the summum bonum of this life—A young man of rank should not glide through the world, without a distinguished rage, or, as they call it in England—a hobby-horse.

Cæsar. A hobby-horse!

Vin. Yes; that is, every man of figure determines on setting out in life, in that land of liberty, in what line to ruin himself; and that choice is called his hobby-horse. One makes the turf his scene of action—another drives about tall phaetons, to peep into their neighbour's garret windows; and a third rides his hobby-horse in parliament, where it jerks him, sometimes on one side, and sometimes on the other; sometimes in, and sometimes out; till at length he is jerked out of his honesty, and his constituents out of their freedom.

Cæsar. Ay!—Well, 'tis a wonder, that with such sort of hobby-horses as these, they should still outride all the world, to the goal of glory.

Vin. This is all cantabile; nothing to do with the subject of the piece, which is Donna Olivia;—pray give me the key-note to her heart.

Cæsar. Upon my word, signor, to speak in your own phrase, I believe that note has never yet been sounded.—Ah! here she comes! look at her.—Isn't she a fine girl?

Vin. Touching! Musical I'll be sworn! her very air is harmonious!

Cæsar. [*Aside.*] I wish thou may'st find her tongue so.

Enter OLIVIA, *courtesies profoundly to each.*

Daughter, receive Don Vincentio—his rank, fortune, and merit, entitle him to the heiress of a grandee; but he is contented to become my son-in-law, if you can please him. [OLIVIA *courtesies again.*

Vin. Please me! she entrances me! Her presence thrills me like a cadenza of Pachierotti's, and every nerve vibrates to the music of her looks.

Her step andante gently moves,
Pianos glance from either eye;
Oh, how larghetto is the heart
That charms so forte can defy!

Donna Olivia, will you be contented to receive me as a lover?

Oliv. Yes, sir—No, sir.

Vin. Yes, sir! no, sir! bewitching timidity!

Cæsar. Yes, sir, she's remarkably timid.—She's in the right cue, I see. [*Aside.*

Vin. 'Tis clear you have never travelled—I shall be delighted to show you England.—You will there see how entirely timidity is banished the sex. You must affect a marked character, and maintain it at all hazards.

Oliv. 'Tis a very fine day, sir.

Vin. Madam!

Oliv. I caught a sad cold the other evening.—Pray, was you at the ball last night?

Vin. What ball, fair lady?

Oliv. Bless me! they say Lucinda has run away with her footman, and Don Philip has married his housemaid.—Now am I not very agreeable?

[*Apart to* DON CÆSAR.

Cæsar. Oh! such perverse obedience!

Vin. Really, madam, I have not the honour to know Don Philip and Lucinda—nor am I happy enough entirely to comprehend you.

Oliv. No! I only meant to be agreeable—but, perhaps, you have no taste for pretty little small talk?

Vin. Pretty little small talk!

Oliv. A marked character you admire; so do I—I dote on it.—I would not resemble the rest of the world in any thing.

Vin. My taste to the fiftieth part of a crochet!—We shall agree admirably when we are married.

Oliv. And that will be unlike the rest of the world, and therefore, charming!

Cæsar. [*Aside.*] It will do! I have hit her humour at last. Why didn't this young dog offer himself before?

Oliv. I believe, I have the honour to carry my taste that way farther than you, Don Vincentio.—Pray, now, what is your usual style in living?

Vin. My winters I spend in Madrid, as other people do. My summers I drawl through at my castle——

Oliv. As other people do!—and yet you pretend to taste and singularity, ha! ha! ha! Good Don Vincentio, never talk of a marked character again. Go into the country in July, to smell roses and woodbines, when every body regales on their fragrance! Now, I would rusticate only in winter, and my bleak

castle should be decorated with verdure and flowers, amidst the soft zephyrs of December.

Cæsar. [*Aside.*] Oh; she'll go too far!

Oliv. On the leafless trees I would hang green branches—the labour of silk-worms, and, therefore, natural; whilst my rose-shrubs and myrtles should be scented by the first perfumers in Italy. Unnatural, indeed, but, therefore, singular and striking.

Vin. Oh, charming! you beat me, where I thought myself the strongest. Would they but establish newspapers here, to paragraph our singularities, we should be the most envied couple in Spain!

Cæsar. [*Aside.*] By St. Anthony, he is as mad as she is!

Vin. What say you, Don Cæsar? Olivia, and her winter garden, and I and my music.

Oliv. Music, did you say? Music! I am passionately fond of that!

Cæsar. She has saved my life! I thought she was going to knock down his hobby-horse. [*Aside.*

Vin. You enchant me! I have the finest band in Madrid—My first violin draws a longer bow than Giardini; my clarionets, my viol de gamba——Oh, you shall have such concerts!

Oliv. Concerts! Pardon me there—My passion is a single instrument.

Vin. That's carrying singularity very far indeed! I love a crash; so does every body of taste.

Oliv. But my taste isn't like every body's; my nerves are so particularly fine, that more than one instrument overpowers them.

Vin. Pray tell me the name of that one: I am sure it must be the most elegant and captivating in the world.—I am impatient to know it.—We'll have no other instrument in Spain, and I will study to become its master, that I may woo you with its music. Charming Olivia! tell me, is it a harpsichord? a piano forte? a pentachord? a harp?

Oliv. You have it, you have it; a harp—yes, a Jew's harp is to me the only instrument. Are you not charmed with the delightful h—u—m of its base, running on the ear like the distant rumble of a state coach? It presents the idea of vastness and importance to the mind. The moment you are its master —I'll give you my hand.

Vin. Da capo, madam, da capo! a Jew's harp!

Oliv. Bless me, sir, don't I tell you so? Violins chill me; clarionets, by sympathy, hurt my lungs; and, instead of maintaining a band under my roof, I would not keep a servant who knew a bassoon from the flute, or could tell whether he heard a jigg, or a canzonetta.

Cæsar. Oh, thou perverse one! you know you love concerts—you know you do. [*In great agitation.*

Oliv. I detest them! It's vulgar custom that attaches people to the sound of fifty different instruments at once; 'twould be as well to talk on the same subject in fifty different tongues. A band! 'tis a mere olio of sound! I'd rather listen to a three-stringed guitar, serenading a sempstress in some neighbouring garret.

Cæsar. Oh, you——Don Vincentio, this is nothing but perverseness, wicked perverseness. Hussy!—didn't you shake when you mentioned a garret? didn't bread and water and a step-mother come into your head at the same time?

Vin. Piano, piano, good sir! Spare yourself all farther trouble. Should the Princess of Guzarat, and all her diamond mines, offer themselves, I would not accept them in lieu of my band—a band that has half ruined me to collect. I would have allowed Donna Olivia a blooming garden in winter; I would even have procured barrenness and snow for her in the dog-days; but to have my band insulted! to have my knowledge in music slighted!—to be roused from all the energies of composition, by the

drone of a Jew's harp!—I cannot breathe under the idea.

Cæsar. Then—then you refuse her, sir?

Vin. I cannot use so harsh a word—I take my leave of the lady—Adieu, madam—I leave you to enjoy your solos, whilst I fly to the raptures of a crash. [*Exit.*

[CÆSAR *goes up to her, und looks her in the Face; then goes off without speaking.*

Oliv. Mercy! that silent anger is terrifying! I read a young mother-in-law, and an old lady abbess, in every line of his face.

Enter VICTORIA.

Well, you heard the whole, I suppose?—heard poor unhappy me scorned and rejected.

Vict. I heard you in imminent danger; and expected Signor Da Capo would have snapped you up, in spite of caprice and extravagance.

Oliv. Oh, they charmed, instead of scaring him. I soon found that my only chance was to fall across his caprice. Where is the philosopher who could withstand that?

Vict. But what, my good cousin, does all this tend to?

Oliv. I dare say you can guess. Penelope had never cheated her lovers with a never-ending web, had she not had an Ulysses.

Vict. An Ulysses! what, are you then married?

Oliv. O, no, not yet! but, believe me, my design is not to lead apes; nor is my heart an icicle. If you choose to know more, put on your veil, and slip with me through the garden to the Prado.

Vict. I can't, indeed. I am this moment going to dress *en homme*, to visit the impatient Portuguese.

Oliv. Send an excuse; for, positively, you go with me. Heaven and earth! I am going to meet a

man! whom I have been fool enough to dream and think of these two years, and I don't know that ever he thought of me in his life

Vict. Two years discovering that?

Oliv. He has been abroad. The only time I ever saw him was at the Duchess of Medina's—there were a thousand people; and he was so elegant, so careless, so handsome!—In a word, though he set off for France the next morning, by some witchcraft or other, he has been before my eyes ever since.

Vict. Was the impression mutual?

Oliv. He hardly noticed me. I was then a bashful thing, just out of a convent, and shrunk from observation.

Vict. Why, I thought you were going to meet him?

Oliv. To be sure; I sent him a command this morning, to be at the Prado. I am determined to find out if his heart is engaged, and if it is——

Vict. You'll cross your arms, and crown your brow with willows?

Oliv. No, positively; not whilst we have myrtles. I would prefer Julio, 'tis true, to all his sex; but if he is stupid enough to be insensible to me, I sha'n't, for that reason, pine like a girl, on chalk and oatmeal.—No, no; in that case I shall form a new plan, and treat my future lovers with more civility.

Vict. You are the only woman in love, I ever heard talk reasonably.

Oliv. Well, prepare for the Prado, and I'll give you a lesson against your days of widowhood. Don't you wish this the moment, Victoria? A pretty widow at four-and-twenty has more subjects, and a wider empire, than the first monarch upon earth. I long to see you in your weeds.

Vict. Never may you see them! Oh, Olivia! my happiness, my life, depend on my husband. The fond

hope of still being united to him gives me spirits in my affliction, and enables me to support even the period of his neglect with patience. [*Exeunt.*

ACT THE THIRD.

SCENE I.

A long Street.

JULIO *enters from a Garden Gate, with precipitation; a* SERVANT *within fastens the Gate.*

Julio. Yes, yes, bar the gate fast, Cerberus, lest some other curious traveller should stumble on your confines.—If ever I am so caught again—

GARCIA *enters, going hastily across,* JULIO *seizes him.*

Don Garcia, never make love to a woman in a veil.

Gar. Why so, pr'ythee? Veils and secrecy are the chief ingredients in a Spanish amour; but in two years, Julio, thou art grown absolutely French.

Julio. That may be; but if ever I trust to a veil again, may no lovely, blooming beauty ever trust me. Why, dost know, I have been an hour at the feet of a creature whose first birth-day must have been kept the latter end of the last century, and whose

trembling weak voice, I mistook for the timid cadence of bashful fifteen!

Gar. Ha! ha! ha! What a happiness to have seen thee in thy raptures, petitioning for a half glance only of the charms the envious veil concealed!

Julio. Yes; and when she unveiled her Gothic countenance, to render the thing completely ridiculous, she began moralizing; and positively would not let me out of the snare, till I had persuaded her she had worked a conversion, and that I'd never make love—but in an honest way again.

Gar. Oh, that honest way of love-making is delightful to be sure! I had a dose of it this morning; but, happily, the ladies have not yet learned to veil their tempers, though they have their faces.

Enter DON VINCENTIO.

Vin. Julio! Garcia! congratulate me!—Such an escape!

Julio. What have you escaped?

Vin. Matrimony.

Gar. Nay, then our congratulations may be mutual. I have had a matrimonial escape too, this very day. I was almost on the brink of the ceremony with the veriest Xantippe!

Vin. Oh, that was not my case—mine was a sweet creature, all elegance, all life.

Julio. Then where's the cause of congratulation?

Vin. Cause!—why she's ignorant of music! prefers a jig to a canzonetta, and a Jew's harp to a pentachord.

Gar. Had my nymph no other fault, I would pardon that, for she was lovely and rich.

Vin. Mine, too, was lovely and rich; and, I'll be sworn, as ignorant of scolding, as of the gamut!—but not to know music!

Julio. Gentle, lovely, and rich! and ignorant only of music!

Gar. A venial crime, indeed! if the sweet creature will marry me, she shall carry a Jew's harp always in her train, as a Scotch laird does his bagpipes. I wish you'd give me your interest.

Vin. Oh, most willingly, if thou hast so gross an inclination; I'll name thee as a dull-soul'd, largo fellow, to her father, Don Cæsar.

Gar. Cæsar!—what Don Cæsar?

Vin. De Zuniga.

Gar. Impossible!

Vin. Oh, I'll answer for her mother. So much is Don Zuniga her father, that he does not know a semibreve from a culverin!

Gar. The name of the lady?

Vin. Olivia.

Gar. Why, you must be mad—that's my termagant!

Vin. Termagant!—ha! ha! ha! Thou hast certainly some vixen of a mistress, who infects thy ears towards the whole sex. Olivia is timid and elegant.

Gar. By Juno, there never existed such a scold!

Vin. By Orpheus, there never was a gayer tempered creature!—Spirit enough to be charming, that's all. If she loved harmony, I'd marry her tomorrow.

Julio. Ha! ha! what a ridiculous jangle 'Tis evident you speak of two different women.

Gar. I speak of Donna Olivia, heiress to Don Cæsar de Zuniga.

Vin. I speak of the heiress of Don Cæsar de Zuniga, who is called Donna Olivia.

Gar. I perceive you mean to insult me.

Vin. Your perceptions are very rapid, sir, but if you choose to think so, I'll settle that point with you immediately: but, for fear of consequences, I'll fly home, and add the last bar to my concerto; and then meet you where you please.

Julio. Pho! this is evidently misapprehension.

To clear the matter up, I'll visit the lady, if you'll introduce me, Vincentio;—but you shall both promise to be governed in this dispute by my decision.

Vin. I'll introduce you with joy, if you'll try to persuade her of the necessity of music, and the charms of harmony.

Gar. Yes, she needs that——You'll find her all jar and discord.

Julio. Come, no more, Garcia; thou art but a sort of male vixen thyself.—Melodious Vincentio, when shall I expect you?

Vin. This evening.

Julio. Not this evening; I have engaged to meet a goldfinch in a grove—then I shall have music, you rogue!

Vin. It won't, being at night.

Julio. Then I'll talk to it till the morning, and hear it pour out its matins to the rising sun. Call on me to-morrow; I'll then attend you to Donna Olivia, and declare faithfully the impression her character makes on me.—Come, Garcia, I must not leave you together, least his crotchets and your minums should fall into a crash of discords.

[*Exeunt, opposite sides.*

SCENE II.

The Prado.

Enter DON CARLOS.

Car. All hail to the powers of burgundy! Three flasks to my own share! What sorrows can stand against three flasks of burgundy? I was a damned

melancholy fellow this morning, going to shoot myself to get rid of my troubles.—Where are my troubles now? Gone to the moon, to look for my wits; and there, I hope, they'll remain together, if one cannot come back without t'other. But where is this indolent dog, Julio? He fit to receive appointments from ladies! Sure I have not missed the hour.—No, but seven yet—[*Looking at his watch.*]—Seven's the hour, by all the joys of burgundy! The rogue must be here—let's reconnoitre.

Enter VICTORIA *and* OLIVIA, *veiled, from the top.*

Oliv. Positively, mine's a pretty spark, to let me be first at the place of appointment. I have half resolved to go home again, to punish him.

Vict. I'll answer for its being but half a resolution—to make it entire, would be to punish yourself.—There's a solitary man—Is not that he?

Oliv. I think not. If he'd please to turn his face this way——

Vict. That's impossible, while the loadstone is the other way. He is looking at the woman in the next walk—Can't you disturb him?

Oliv. [*Screams.*] Oh! a frightful frog!

[CARLOS *turns.*

Vict. Heavens, 'tis my husband!

Oliv. Your husband! Is that Don Carlos?

Vict. It is indeed.

Oliv. Why, really, now I see the man, I don't wonder that you are in no hurry for your weeds. He is moving towards us.

Vict. I cannot speak to him, and yet my soul flies to meet him.

Car. Pray, lady, what occasioned that pretty scream? I shrewdly suspect it was a trap.

Oliv. A trap! ha! ha! ha!—a trap for you!

Car. Why not, madam? Zounds, a man six fee

high, and three flasks of burgundy in his head, is worth laying a trap for.

Oliv. Yes, unless he happens to be trapped before. 'Tis about two years since you was caught, I take it —Do keep farther off!—Odious? a married man!

Car. The devil! Is it posted under every saint in the street, that I am a married man?

Oliv. No, you carry the marks about you; that rueful phiz could never belong to a bachelor.—Besides, there's an odd appearance on your temples—does your hat sit easily?

Car. By all the thorns of matrimony, if——

Oliv. Poor man! how natural to swear by what one feels—but why were you in such haste to gather the thorns of matrimony? Bless us, had you but looked about you a little, what a market might have been made of that fine, proper, promising person of yours!

Car. Confound thee, confound thee! If thou art a wife, may thy husband plague thee with jealousies, and thou never be able to give him cause for them; and if thou art a maid, may'st thou be an old one! [*Going, meets* DON JULIO.] Oh, Julio, look not that way; there's a tongue will stun thee!

Julio. Heaven be praised! I love female prattle. A woman's tongue can never scare me. Which of these two goldfinches makes the music?

Car. Oh, this is as silent as a turtle—[*Taking* VICTORIA's *hand*]—only coos now and then.—Perhaps you don't hate a married man, sweet one?

Vict. You guess right; I love a married man.

Car. Hah, say'st thou so? wilt thou love me?

Vict. Will you let me?

Car. Let thee, my charmer! how I'll cherish thee for't—What would I not give for thy heart!

Vict. I demand a price, that perhaps you cannot give—I ask unbounded love; but you have a wife.

Car. And, therefore, the readier to love every other woman; 'tis in your favour, child.

Vict. Will you love me ever?

Car. Ever! yes, ever; till we find each other dull company, and yawn, and talk of our neighbours for amusement.

Vict. Farewell! I suspected you to be a bad chapman, and that you would not reach my terms.

[*Going.*

Car. Nay, I'll come to your terms, if I can;—but move this way; I am fearful of that wood-pecker at your elbow—should she begin again, her noise will scare all the pretty loves that are playing about my heart. Don't turn your head towards them; if you like to listen to love tales, you'll meet fond pairs enough in this walk. [*Forcing her gently off.*

Julio. I really believe, though you deny it, that you are my destiny—that is, you fated me hither See, is not this your mandate?

[*Taking a letter from his pocket.*

Oliv. Oh, delightful! the scrawl of some chambermaid: or, perhaps, of your valet, to give you an air. What is it signed? Marriatornes? Tomasa? Sancha?

Julio. Nay, now I am convinced the letter is yours, since you abuse it: so you may as well confess?

Oliv. Suppose I should, you can't be sure that I do not deceive you.

Julio. True; but there is one point in which I have made a vow not to be deceived; therefore, the preliminary is, that you throw off your veil.

Oliv. My veil!

Julio. Positively, if you reject this article, our negociation ends.

Oliv. You have no right to offer articles, unless you own yourself conquered.

Julio. I own myself willing to be conquered, and

have, therefore, a right to make the best terms I can. Do you accede to the demand?

Oliv. Certainly not.

Julio. You had better.

Oliv. I protest I will not.

Julio. [*Aside.*] My life upon't, I make you. Why, madam, how absurd this is!—yet, 'tis of no consequence, for I know your features, as well as though I saw them.

Oliv. How can that be?

Julio. I judge of what you hide, by what I see—I could draw your picture.

Oliv. Charming! pray begin the portrait.

Julio. Imprimis, a broad high forehead, rounded at the top, like an old-fashioned gateway.

Oliv. Oh, horrid!

Julio. Little grey eyes, a sharp nose, and hair the colour of rusty prunella.

Oliv. Odious!

Julio. Pale cheeks, thin lips, and——

Oliv. Hold, hold, thou vilifier! [*Throws off her veil, he sinks on one knee.*] There! yes, kneel in contrition for your malicious libel.

Julio. Say rather, in adoration. What a charming creature!

Oliv. So, now for what lies on the other side.

Julio. A forehead formed by the graces; hair, which Cupid would steal for his bow-strings, were he not engaged in shooting through those sparkling hazel circlets, which nature has given you for eyes; lips! that 'twere a sin to call so; they are fresh-gathered rose-leaves, with the fragrant morning-dew still hanging on their rounded surface.

Oliv. Is that extemporaneous, or ready cut, for every woman who takes off her veil to you?

Julio. I believe, 'tis not extemporaneous; for nature, when she finished you, formed the sentiment

in my heart, and there it has been hid, till you, for whom it was formed, called it into words.

Oliv. Suppose I should understand, from all this, that you have a mind to be in love with me, would not you be finely caught?

Julio. Charmingly caught! if you'll let me understand, at the same time, that you have a mind to be in love with me.

Oliv. In love with a man! Heavens! I never loved any thing but a squirrel!

Julio. Make me your squirrel—I'll put on your chain, and gambol and play for ever at your side.

Oliv. But suppose you should have a mind to break the chain?

Julio. Then loosen it; for, if once that humour seizes me, restraint won't cure it. Let me spring and bound at liberty, and when I return to my lovely mistress, tired of all but her, fasten me again to your girdle, and kiss me while you chide.

Oliv. Your servant—to encourage you to leave me again?

Julio. No; to make returning to you the strongest attraction of my life. Why are you silent?

Oliv. I am debating, whether to be pleased or displeased at what you have said.

Julio. Well?

Oliv. You shall know when I have determined. My friend and yours are approaching this way, and they must not be interrupted.

Julio. 'Twould be barbarous—we'll retire as far off as you please.

Oliv. But we retire separately, sir; that lady is a woman of honour, and this moment of the greatest importance to her. You may, however, conduct me to the gate, on condition that you leave me instantly.

Julio. Leave her instantly—oh, then I know my cue. [*Exit together, at top.*

Enter CARLOS, *followed by* VICTORIA, *unveiled.*

Car. [*Looking back on her.*] My wife!

Vict. Oh, heavens! I will veil myself again. I will hide my face for ever from you, if you will still feast my ears with those soft vows, which, a moment since, you poured forth so eagerly.

Car. My wife!—making love to my own wife!

Vict. Why should one of the dearest moments of my life be to you so displeasing?

Car. So, I am caught in this snare; by way of agreeable surprise, I suppose.

Vict. 'Would you could think it so!

Car. No, madam! by heaven, 'tis a surprise fatal to every hope with which you may have flattered yourself. What! am I to be followed, haunted, watched?

Vict. Not to upbraid you. I followed you because my castle, without you, seemed a dreary desert. Indeed, I will never upbraid you.

Car. Generous assurance! never upbraid me—no, by heavens! I'll take care you never shall. She has touched my soul, but I dare not yield to the impression. Her softness is worse than death to me!

[*Aside.*

Vict. 'Would I could find words to please you!

Car. You cannot; therefore leave me, or suffer me to go, without attempting to follow me.

Vict. Is it possible you can be so barbarous?

Car. Do not expostulate; your first vowed duty is obedience—that word so grating to your sex.

Vict. To me it was never grating; to obey you has been my joy; even now I will not dispute your will, though I feel, for the first time, obedience hateful. [*Going, and then turning back.*] Oh, Carlos! my dear Carlos! I go, but my soul remains with you. [*Exit.*

Car. Oh, horrible! had I not taken this harsh measure, I must have killed myself; for how could

I tell her that I have made her a beggar? better she should hate, detest me, than that my tenderness should give her a prospect of felicity, which now she can never taste. Oh, wine-created spirit! where art thou now? Madness, return to me again! for reason presents me nothing but despair.

Enter JULIO, *from the top.*

Julio. Carlos, who the devil can they be? my charming little witch was inflexible. I hope yours has been more communicative.

Car. Folly! Nonsense!

Julio. Folly! Nonsense! What, a pretty woman's smile!—but you married fellows have neither taste nor joy.

Car. Pshaw! [*Exit.*

Julio. Pshaw! that's a husband! Humph—suppose my fair one should want to debase me into such an animal; she can't have so much villany in her disposition: and yet, if she should? pho! it won't bear thinking about. If I do so mad a thing, it must be as cowards fight, without daring to reflect on the danger. [*Exit.*

SCENE III.

An Apartment in the House of DON VASQUEZ, MARCELLA'S *Father.*

Enter DON CÆSAR *and* DON VASQUEZ.

Cæsar. Well, Don Vasquez, and a——you——then I say, you have a mind that I should marry your daughter?

Vasq. It is sufficient, signor, that you have signified to us your intention—my daughter shall prove her gratitude, in her attention to your felicity

Cæsar. 'Egad, now it comes to the push! [*Aside.*] hem, hem!—but just nineteen, you say?

Vasq. Exactly, the eleventh of last month.

Cæsar. Pity it was not twenty.

Vasq. Why, a year can make no difference, I should think.

Cæsar. O, yes it does; a year's a great deal; they are so skittish at nineteen.

Vasq. Those who are skittish at nineteen, I fear, you won't find much mended at twenty. Marcella is very grave, and a pretty little, plump, fair——

Cæsar. Ay, fair again! pity she isn't brown, or olive—I like your olives.

Vasq. Brown and olive! you are very whimsical, my old friend!

Cæsar. Why, these fair girls are so stared at by the men; and the young fellows, now-a-days, have a damned impudent stare with them—'tis very abashing to a woman—'tis very distressing!

Vasq. Yes, so it is; but happily their distress is of that nature, that it generally goes off in a simper. But come, I'll send Marcella to you, and she will—

Cæsar. No, no, stay, my good friend. [*Gasping.*] You are in a violent hurry!

Vasq. Why, truly, signor, at our time of life, when we determine to marry, we have no time to lose.

Cæsar. Why, that's very true, and so—oh! St. Anthony, now it comes to the point!—but there can be no harm in looking at her—a look won't bind us for better for worse. [*Aside.*] Well then, if you have a mind, I say, you may let me see her.

[*Exit* VASQUEZ.

[CÆSAR *puts on his spectacles.*] Ay, here she comes. —I hear her—trip, trip, trip! I don't like that step.

A woman should always tread steadily, with dignity; it awes the men.

Enter VASQUEZ, *leading* MARCELLA.

Vasq. There, Marcella, behold your future husband; and remember, that your kindness to him will be the standard of your duty to me. [*Exit.*

Mar. Oh, heavens! [*Aside.*

Cæsar. Somehow, I am afraid to look round.

Mar. Surely he does not know that I am here! [*Coughs gently.*

Cæsar. So, she knows how to give an item, I find.

Mar. Pray, signor, have you any commands for me?

Cæsar. Hum!—not nonplussed at all! [*Looks around.*] Oh! that eye, I don't like that eye.

Mar. My father commanded me——

Cæsar. Yes, I know—I know. [*To her.*] Why, now I look again, there is a sort of a modest—Oh, that smile; that smile will never do. [*Aside.*

Mar. I understand, signor, that you have demanded my hand in marriage?

Cæsar. Upon my word, plump to the point! [*Aside.*] Yes, I did a sort of—I can't say but that I did——.

Mar. I am not insensible of the honour you do me, sir, but—but——

Cæsar. But!—What, don't you like the thoughts of the match?

Mar. Oh, yes, sir, yes—exceedingly. I dare not say no. [*Aside.*

Cæsar. Oh, you do—exceedingly! What, I suppose, child, your head is full of jewels, and finery, and equipage? [*With ill humour.*

Mar. No, indeed, sir.

Cæsar. No, what then? what sort of a life do you expect to lead, when you are my wife? what pleasures do ye look forward to?

Mar. None.

Cæsar. Hey!

Mar. I shall obey my father, sir; I shall marry you; but I shall be most wretched! [*Weeps.*

Cæsar. Indeed!

Mar. There is not a fate I would not prefer;—but pardon me!

Cæsar. Go on, go on, I never was better pleased.

Mar. Pleased at my reluctance!

Cæsar. Never, never better pleased in my life;—so you had really, now, you young baggage, rather have me for a grandfather than a husband?

Mar. Forgive my frankness, sir—a thousand times?

Cæsar. My dear girl, let me kiss your hand.—'Egad! you've let me off charmingly. I was frightened out of my wits, lest you should have taken as violent an inclination to the match as your father has.

Mar. Dear sir, you charm me.

Cæsar. But hark ye!—you'll certainly incur your father's anger, if I don't take the refusal entirely on myself, which I will do, if you'll only assist me in a little business I have in hand.

Mar. Any thing to show my gratitude.

Cæsar. You must know I can't get my daughter to marry—there's nothing on earth will drive her to it, but the dread of a mother-in-law. Now if you will let it appear to her, that you and I are driving to the goal of matrimony, I believe it will do—what say you? shall we be lovers in play?

Mar. If you are sure it will be only in play.

Cæsar. Oh, my life upon't—but we must be very fond, you know.

Mar. To be sure—exceedingly tender; ha! ha! ha!

Cæsar. You must smile upon me, now and then, roguishly; and slide your hand into mine, when you are sure she sees you, and let me pat your cheek, and——

Mar. Oh, no farther, pray; that will be quite sufficient.

Cæsar. Gad, I begin to take a fancy to your rogue's face, now I'm in no danger; mayn't we—mayn't we salute sometimes? it will seem infinitely more natural.

Mar. Never! such an attempt would make me fly off at once.

Cæsar. Well, you must be lady governess in this business. I'll go home now, and fret madam about her young mother-in-law—By'e, sweeting!

Mar. By'e, charmer!

Cæsar. Oh, bless its pretty eyes! [*Exit.*

Mar. Bless its pretty spectacles! Ha! ha! ha! enter into a league with a cross old father against a daughter! why, how could he suspect me capable of so much treachery! I could not answer it to my conscience. No, no, I'll acquaint Donna Olivia with the plot; and, as in duty bound, we'll turn our arms against Don Cæsar. [*Exit.*

ACT THE FOURTH.

SCENE I.

DONNA LAURA'S.

Enter DONNA LAURA *and* PEDRO.

Laura. Well, Pedro, hast thou seen Don Florio?

Ped. Yes, Donna.

Laura. How did he look when he read my letter?

Ped. Mortal well; I never see'd him look better —he'd got on a new cloak, and a——

Laura. Pho, blockhead! did he look pleased? did he kiss my name? did he press the billet to his bosom with all the warmth of love?

Ped. No, he didn't warm it that way; but he did another, for he put it into the fire.

Laura. How!

Ped. Yes, and when I spoke, he started, for, I think, he had forgot that I was by—so, says he, go home and tell Donna Laura I fly to her presence.

[*She waves her hand for him to go.*

Laura. Is it possible? so contemptuously to destroy the letter, in which my whole heart overflowed with tenderness! Oh, how idly I talk! he is here: his very voice pierces my heart! I dare not meet his eye thus discomposed! [*Exit.*

Enter VICTORIA, *in Men's Clothes, preceded by* SANCHA.

San. I will inform my mistress that you are here, Don Florio; I thought she had been in this apartment. [*Exit.*

Vict. Now must I, with a mind torn by anxieties, once more assume the lover of my husband's mistress—of the woman who has robbed me of his heart, and his children of their fortune. Sure my task is hard. Oh, love! Oh, married love, assist me! If I can, by any art, obtain from her that fatal deed, I shall save my little ones from ruin, and then —But I hear her step. [*Agitated, pressing her hand on her bosom.*] There! I have hid my griefs within my heart, and, now for all the impudence of an accomplished cavalier! [*Sings an air, sets her hat in a glass, dances a few steps, &c. then runs to* LAURA, *and seizes her hand.*] My lovely Laura!

Laura. That look speaks Laura loved, as well as lovely.

Vict. To be sure! Petrarch immortalized his Laura by his verses, and mine shall be immortal in my passion.

Laura. Oh, Florio, how deceitful! I know not what enchantment binds me to thee.

Vict. Me! my dear! is all this to me?

[*Playing carelessly with the feather in her hat.*

Laura. Yes, ingrate, thee!

Vict. Positively, Laura, you have these extravagancies so often, I wonder my passion can stand them. To be plain, those violences in your temper may make a pretty relief in the flat of matrimony, child, but they do not suit that state of freedom which is necessary to my happiness. It was by such destructive arts as these you cured Don Carlos of his love.

Laura. Cured Don Carlos! Oh, Florio! wert thou but as he is?

Vict. Why, you don't pretend he loves you still?

[*Eagerly.*

Laura. Yes, most ardently and truly.

Vict. Hah!

Laura. If thou wouldst persuade me that thy passion is real, borrow his words, his looks, be a hypocrite one dear moment, and speak to me in all the phrensy of that love which warms the heart of Carlos.

Vict. The heart of Carlos!

Laura. Hah, that seemed a jealous pang—it gives my hopes new life. [*Aside.*] Yes, Florio, he, indeed, knows what it is to love. For me he forsook a beauteous wife; nay, and with me would forsake his country.

Vict. Villain! Villain!

Laura. Nay, let not the thought distress you thus;—Carlos I despise—he is the weakest of mankind.

Vict. 'Tis false, madam, you cannot despise him.—Carlos the weakest of mankind! Heavens! what woman could resist him! Persuasion sits on his tongue, and love, almighty love, triumphant in his eyes!

Laura. This is strange; you speak of your rival with the admiration of a mistress.

Vict. Laura! it is the fate of jealousy, as well as love, to see the charms of its object increased and heightened. I am jealous—jealous to distraction of Don Carlos; and cannot taste peace, unless you'll swear never to see him more.

Laura. I swear, joyfully swear, never to behold or speak to him again. When, dear youth, shall we retire to Portugal?—We are not safe here.

Vict. You know I am not rich.—You must first sell the lands my rival gave you.

[*Observing her with apprehension.*

Laura. 'Tis done—I have found a purchaser, and to-morrow the transfer will be finished.

Vict. [*Aside.*] Ah! I have now then nothing to trust to but the ingenuity of Gasper.—There is reason to fear Don Carlos had no right in that estate with which you suppose yourself endowed.

Laura. No right! what can have given you those suspicions?

Vict. A conversation with Juan his steward—who assures me that his master never had an estate in Leon.

Laura. Never! what, not by marriage?

Vict. Juan says so.

Laura. My blood runs cold; can I have taken pains to deceive myself?—Could I think so, I should be mad! • • •

Vict. These doubts may soon be annihilated, or confirmed to certainty.—I have seen Don Sancho, the uncle of Victoria; he is now in Madrid.—You have told me that he once professed a passion for you.

Laura. Oh, to excess! but at that time I had another object.

Viet. Have you conversed with him much?

Laura. I never saw him nearer than from my balcony, where he used to ogle me through a glass, suspended by a riband, like an order of knighthood; he is weak enough to fancy it gives him an air of distinction—Ha! ha! But where can I find him? I must see him.

Viet. Write him a billet, and I will send it to his lodgings.

Laura. Instantly.—Dear Florio, a new prospect opens to me—Don Sancho is rich and generous; and, by playing on his passions, his fortune may be a constant fund to us.—I'll dip my pen in flattery.

[*Exit.*

Viet. Base woman! how can I pity thee, or regret the steps which my duty obliges me to take? For myself, I would not swerve from the nicest line of rectitude, nor wear the shadow of deceit.—But, for my children!—Is there a parental heart that will not pardon me? [*Exit.*

SCENE II.

DON CÆSAR'S.

Enter OLIVIA *and* MINETTE.

Oliv. Well, here we are in private—what is this charming intelligence of which thou art so full this morning?

Min. Why, ma'am, as I was in the balcony that overlooks Don Vasquez's garden, Donna Marcella

told me, that Don Cæsar had last night been to pay her a visit previous to their marriage, and—

Oliv. Their marriage! How can you give me the intelligence with such a look of joy? Their marriage! —what will become of me?

Min. Dear ma'am! if you'll but have patience.—She says that Don Cæsar and she are perfectly agreed—

Oliv. Still with that smirking face?—I can't have patience.

Min. Then, madam, if you won't let me tell the story, please to read it——Here's a letter from Donna Marcella.

Oliv. Why did you not give it me at first?

[*Reads.*

Min. Because I didn't like to be cut out of my story. If orators were obliged to come to the point at once, mercy on us! what tropes and figures we should lose!

Oliv. Oh, Minette! I give you leave to smirk again—listen. [*Reads.*] *I am more terrified at the idea of becoming your father's wife, than you are in the expectation of a stepmother; and Don Cæsar would be as loth as either of us.—He only means to frighten you into matrimony, and I have, on certain conditions, agreed to assist him; but, whatever you may hear, or see, be assured that nothing is so impossible, as that he should become the husband of Donna Marcella.*—Oh, delightful girl! how I love her for this!

Min. Yes, ma'am; and if you'd had patience, I should have told you that she's now here with Don Cæsar, in grave debate, how to begin the attack, which must force you to take shelter in the arms of a husband.

Oliv. Ah, no matter how they begin it! Let them amuse themselves in raising batteries; my reserved fire shall tumble them about their ears, in the moment my poor father is singing his Io's for victory.—

But here come the lovers.—Well, I protest now, sixteen and sixty is a very comely sight.—'Tis contrast gives effect to every thing.—Lud! how my father ogles! I had no idea he was such a sort of man.—I am really afraid he isn't quite so good as he should be!

Enter DON CÆSAR, *leading* MARCELLA.

Cæsar. H—m! Madam looks very placid; we shall discompose her, or I am mistaken. [*Apart.*] So, Olivia, here's Donna Marcella come to visit you—though as matters are, that respect is due from you.

Oliv. I am sensible of the condescension.—My dear ma'am, how very good this is! [*Taking her hand.*

Cæsar. Yes, you'll think yourself wonderfully obliged, when you know all. [*Aside.*] Pray, Donna Marcella, what do you think of these apartments?—The furniture and decorations are my daughter's taste; would you wish them to remain, or will you give orders to have them changed?

Mar. Changed! undoubtedly; I can have nobody's taste govern my apartments but my own.

Cæsar. Ah, that touches! See how she looks!—[*Apart.*] They shall receive your orders.—You understand, I suppose, from this, that every thing is fixed on between Donna Marcella and me?

Oliv. Yes, sir, I understand it perfectly; and it gives me infinite pleasure.

Cæsar. Eh! pleasure?

Oliv. Entirely, sir——

Cæsar. Tol-de-rol! Ah, that won't do—that won't do! You can't hide it.—You are frightened out of your wits at the thoughts of a mother-in-law; especially a young, gay, handsome one.

Oliv. Pardon me, sir—the thought of a mother-in-law was indeed disagreeable; but her being young and gay qualifies it.—I hope, ma'am, you'll give us balls, and the most spirited parties. You can't think

how stupid we have been.—My dear father hates those things; but I hope now—

Cæsar. Hey! hey! hey! what's the meaning of all this? Why, hussy, don't you know you'll have no apartment but the garret?

Oliv. That will benefit my complexion, sir, by mending my health. 'Tis charming to sleep in an elevated situation.

Cæsar. Here! here's an obstinate perverse slut!

Oliv. Bless me, sir, are you angry that I look forward to your marriage without murmuring?

Cæsar. Yes, I am—yes, I am; you ought to murmur; and you ought to—to—to—

Oliv. Dear me! I find love, taken up late in life, has a bad effect on the temper.—I wish, my dear papa, you had felt the influence of Donna Marcella's charms somewhat sooner.

Cæsar. You do! you do! why this must be all put on.—This can't be real.

Oliv. Indeed, indeed it is; and I protest, your engagement with this lady has given me more pleasure than I have tasted ever since you began to tease me about a husband. You seemed determined to have a marriage in the family; and I hope, now, I shall live in quiet with my dear, sweet, young mother-in-law.

Cæsar. Oh, oh! [*Walking about.*] Was there ever —She doesn't care for a mother-in-law!—Can't frighten her!

Oliv. Sure my fate is very peculiar; that being pleased with your choice, and submitting, with humble duty, to your will, should be the cause of offence.

Cæsar. Hussy! I dont want you to be pleased with my choice—I don't want you to submit with humble duty to my will.—Where I do want you to submit, you rebel: you are a—you are——But I'll mortify that wayward spirit yet.

[*Exeunt* DON CÆSAR *and* MARCELLA.

Min. Well, really, my master is in a piteous

passion; he seems more angry at your liking his marriage, than at your refusing to be married yourself.—Wouldn't it have been better, madam, to have affected discontent?

Oliv. To what purpose, but to lay myself open to fresh solicitations, in order to get rid of the evil I pretended to dread? Bless us! nothing can be more easy than for my father to be gratified, if he were but lucky in the choice of a lover.

Min. As much as to say, madam, that there is—

Oliv. Why, yes, as much as to say—I see you are resolved to have my secret, Minette, and so—

Enter SERVANT.

Serv. There is a gentleman at the door, madam, called Don Julio de Melessina.—He waits on you from Don Vincentio.

Oliv. Who? Don Julio! it cannot be—art thou sure of his name?

Serv. The servant repeated it twice.—He is in a fine carriage, and seems to be a nobleman.

Oliv. Conduct him hither. [*Exit* SERVANT.] I am astonished! I cannot see him! I would not have him know the incognita to be Olivia for worlds!—There is but one way. [*Aside.*] Minette, ask no questions; but do as I order you.—Receive Don Julio in my name; call yourself the heiress of Don Cæsar; and on no account suffer him to believe that you are any thing else. [*Exit.*

Min. So, then, this is some new lover she is determined to disgust; and fancies that making me pass for her, will complete it. Perhaps her ladyship may be mistaken, though.—[*Looking through the wing.*]—Upon my word, a sweet man! Oh, lud! my heart beats with the very idea of his making love to me, even though he takes me for another! stay! I think he sha'n't find me here.—Standing in the middle of a room gives one's appearance no effect—I'll

enter upon him with an easy swim, or an engaging trip, or a—something that shall strike—the first glance is every thing. [*Exit.*

Enter DON JULIO, *preceded by a* SERVANT, *who retires.*

Julio. Not here! The ridiculous dispute between Garcia and Vincentio gives me irresistible curiosity; though, if she is the character Garcia describes, I expect to be cuffed for my impertinence.—Here she comes!—A pretty, little, smiling girl, 'faith, for a vixen!

Enter MINETTE, *very affectedly.*

Min. Sir, your most obedient humble servant—You are Don Julio de Melessina? I am extremely glad to see you, sir.

Julio. [*Aside.*] A very courteous reception:—You honour me infinitely, madam. I must apologize for waiting on you without a better introduction.—Don Vincentio promised to attend me; but a concert called him to another part of the town, at the moment I prepared to come hither.

Min. A concert!—Yes, sir, he is very fond of music.

Julio. He is, madam:—You, I suppose, have a passion for that charming science?

Min. Oh, yes, I love it mightily.

Julio. [*Aside.*] This is lucky! I think I have heard, Donna Olivia, that your taste that way is peculiar; you are fond of a——'faith, I can hardly speak it, [*Aside.*]—of a——Jew's harp. [*Smothering a laugh.*

Min. A Jew's harp! Mercy! What, do you think a person of my birth and figure can have such fancies as that?——No, sir, I love fiddles, French horns, tabors, and all the cheerful, noisy instruments in the world.

Julio. [*Aside.*] Vincentio must have been mad; and I as mad as him to mention it. Then you are fond of concerts, madam?

Min. Dote on them! I wish he'd offer me a ticket. [*Aside.*

Julio. [*Aside.*] Vincentio is clearly wrong.—Now, to prove how far the other was right in supposing her a vixen.

Min. There is a grand public concert, sir, to be to-morrow. Pray do you go?

Julio. I believe I shall have that pleasure, madam.

Min. My father, Don Cæsar, won't let me purchase a ticket: I think it's very hard.

Julio. Pardon me—I think it's perfectly right.

Min. Right! what, to refuse me a trifling expense, that would procure me a great pleasure?

Julio. Yes, doubtless—the ladies are too fond of pleasure: I think Don Cæsar is exemplary.

Min. Lord, sir! you'd think it very hard, if you were me, to be locked up all your life, and know nothing of the world but what you could catch through the bars of your balcony.

Julio. Perhaps I might; but, as a man, I am convinced 'tis right. Daughters and wives should be equally excluded those destructive haunts of dissipation.—Let them keep to their embroidery, nor ever presume to show their faces but at their own firesides.——This will bring out the Xantippe, surely! [*Aside.*

Min. Well, sir, I don't know—to be sure, home, as you say, is the fittest place for women. For my part I could live for ever at home. I am determined he shall have his way; who knows what may happen? [*Aside.*

Julio. [*Aside.*] By all the powers of caprice, Garcia is as wrong as the other!

Min. I delight in nothing so much as in sitting by my father, and hearing his tales of old times; and I

fancy, when I have a husband, I shall be more happy to sit and listen to his stories of present times.

Julio. Perhaps, your husband, fair lady, might not be inclined so to amuse you. Men have a thousand delights that call them abroad; and probably your chief amusements would be counting the hours of his absence, and giving a tear to each as it passed.

Min. Well, he should never see them, however. I would always smile when he entered; and if he found my eyes red, I'd say, I had been weeping over the history of the unfortunate damsel, whose true love hung himself at sea, and appeared to her afterwards in a wet jacket.—Sure, this will do! [*Aside.*

Julio. I am every moment more astonished! Pray, madam, permit me a question.—Are you, really—yet I cannot doubt it—are you, really, Donna Olivia, the daughter of Don Cæsar, to whom Don Garcia and Don Vincentio had lately the honour of paying their addresses?

Min. Am I Donna Olivia! ha! ha! ha! what a question! Pray, sir, is this my father's house?—Are you Don Julio?

Julio. I beg your pardon; but, to confess, I had heard you described as a lady who had not quite so much sweetness, and——

Min. Oh! what, you had heard that I was a termagant, I suppose.—'Tis all slander, sir: there is not in Madrid, though I say it, a sweeter temper than my own; and though I have refused a good many lovers, yet, if one was to offer himself that I could like—

Julio. You would take pity, and reward his passion?

Min. I would.

Julio. Lovely Donna Olivia, how charming is this frankness!—'Tis a little odd, though! *Aside.*

Min. Why, I believe I should take pity; for it always seemed to me to be very hard-hearted, to be

cruel to a lover that one likes, because, in that case, one should—a—you know, sir, the sooner the affair is over, the better for both parties.

Julio. What the deuce does she mean?—Is this Garcia's sour fruit?

Cæsar. [*Without.*] Olivia! Olivia!

Min. Bless me, I hear my father! Now, sir, I have a particular fancy that you should not tell him, in this first visit, your design.

Julio. Madam! my design!

Min. Yes, that you will not speak out, till we have had a little further conversation, which I'll take care to give you an opportunity for very soon.—He'll be here in a moment: now, pray, Don Julio, go. If he should meet you, and ask who you are, you can say, that you are—you may say, that you came on a visit to my maid, you know. [*Exit.*

Julio. I thank you, madam, [*Aloud.*] for my dismission. [*Aside.*] I never was in such a peril in my life. I believe she has a license in her pocket, a priest in her closet, and the ceremony by heart.

[*Exit.*

ACT THE FIFTH.

SCENE I.

DON CARLOS'S.

DON CARLOS *discovered writing.*

Car. [*Tearing paper, and rising.*] It is in vain!—Language cannot furnish me with terms to soften to Victoria the horrid transaction. Could she see the compunctions of my soul, her gentle heart would pity me. But what then?—She's ruined! my children are undone! Oh! the artifices of one base woman, and my villany to another most amiable one, has made me unfit to live. I am a wretch, who ought to be blotted from society.

Enter PEDRO, *hastily.*

Ped. Sir—sir!

Car. Well!

Ped. Sir, I have just met Don Florio; he asked if my mistress was at home; so I guesses he is going to our house, and so I run to let you know—for I loves to keep my promises, though I am deadly afraid of some mischief.

Car. You have done well.—Go home, and wait for me at the door, and admit me without noise. [*Exit* PEDRO.] At least, then, I shall have the pleasure of revenge; I'll punish that harlot, by sacrificing her paramour in her arms; and then—Oh! [*Exit.*

SCENE II.

DONNA LAURA'S.

Enter LAURA, *with precipitation, followed by* VICTORIA.

Laura. 'Tis his carriage!—How successful was my letter! This, my Florio, is a most important moment.

Vict. It is, indeed; and I will leave you to make every advantage of it. If I am present, I must witness condescensions from you that I shall not be able to bear, though I know them to be but affected.—Now, Gasper, [*Aside.*] play thy part well, and save Victoria! [*Exit.*

Enter GASPER, *dressed as an old Beau; two* SERVANTS *follow him, and take off a rich cloak.*

Gasp. Take my cloak; and, d'ye hear? Ricardo, go home and bring the eider-down cushions for the coach, and tell the fellow not to hurry me post through the streets of Madrid. [*Exeunt* SERVANTS.] I have been jolted from side to side, like a pippin in a mill stream. Drive a man of my rank, as he would a city vintner and his fat wife, going to a bull-fight! Ha, there she is! [*Looking through a glass suspended by a red riband.*]—there she is! Charming Donna Laura! let me thus at the shrine of your beauty—[*Makes an effort to kneel, and falls on his face;* LAURA *assists him to rise.*] Fie, fie, those new shoes!—they have made me skate all day, like a Dutchman on a canal; and now—Well, you see how

profound my adoration is, madam. Common lovers kneel; I was prostrate.

Laura. You do me infinite honour.——Disgustful wretch!—You are thinner than you were, Don Sancho: I protest, now I observe you, you are much altered!

Gasp. Ay, madam—fretting. Your absence threw me into a fever, and that destroyed my bloom:—You see, I look almost a middle-aged man, now.

Laura. No, really; far from it, I assure you.——The fop is as wrinkled as a baboon! [*Aside.*

Gasp. Then jealousy—that gave me a jaundice.—My niece's husband, I hear, Don Carlos, has been my happy rival. Oh, my blade will hardly keep in its scabbard, when I think of him.

Laura. Think no more of him—he has been long banished my thoughts, be assured. I wonder you gave your niece to him with such a fortune.

Gasp. Gave! she gave herself; and, as to fortune, she had not a pistole from me.

Laura. 'Twas, indeed, unnecessary, with so fine an estate as she had in Leon.

Gasp. My niece an estate in Leon! Not enough to give shelter to a field-mouse; and if he has told you so, he is a braggart.

Laura. Told me so!—I have the writings; he has made over the lands to me.

Gasp. Made over the lands to you!—Oh, a deceiver! I begin to suspect a plot. Pray let me see this extraordinary deed. [*She runs to a cabinet.*] A plot, I'll be sworn!

Laura. Here is the deed which made that estate mine for ever. No, sir, I will intrust it in no hand but my own. Yet look over me, and read the description of the lands.

Gasp. [*Reading through his glass.*] H—m—m: *In the vicinage of Rosalvo, bounded on the west by the river——h—m—m, on the east by the forest*——Oh,

an artful dog! I need read no further; I see how the thing is.

Laura. How, sir!—but hold!——Stay a moment —I am breathless with fear.

Gasp. Nay, madam, don't be afraid! 'Tis my estate—that's all; the very castle where I was born; and which I never did, nor ever will, bestow on any Don in the two Castiles. Dissembling rogue! Bribe you with a fictitious title to my estate—ha! ha! ha!

Laura. [*Aside.*] Curses follow him! The villain I employed must have been his creature; his reluctance all art; and whilst I believed myself undoing him, was duped myself!

Gasp. Could you suppose I'd give Carlos such an estate for running away with my niece? No, no!—the vineyards, and the corn fields, and the woods of Rosalva, are not for him.—I've somebody else in my eye—in my eye observe me—to give those to:—Can't you guess who it is?

Laura. No, indeed!—He gives me a glimmering that saves me from despair! [*Aside.*

Gasp. I won't tell you, unless you'll bribe me—I won't indeed. [*Kisses her cheek.*] There, now I'll tell you—they are all for you. Yes, this estate, to which you have taken such a fancy, shall be yours.—I'll give you the deeds if you'll promise to love me, you little cruel thing!

Laura. Can you be serious?

Gasp. I'll sign and seal to-morrow.

Laura. Noble Don Sancho! Thus then I annihilate the proof of his perfidy and my weakness.—Thus, I tear to atoms his detested name; and as I tread on these, so would I on his heart.

Enter VICTORIA.

Vict. My children then are saved! [*In transport.*

Laura. [*Apart.*] Oh, Florio, 'tis as thou saidst—

Carlos was a villain, and deceived me. Why this strange air! Ah, I see the cause—you think me ruined, and will abandon me. Yes, I see it in thy averted face; thou darest not meet my eyes. If I misjudge thee, speak!

Vict. Laura, I cannot speak.—You little guess the emotions of my heart.—Heaven knows I pity you!

Laura. Pity! Oh, villain! and has thy love already snatched the form of pity? Base, deceitful——

Car. [*Without.*] Stand off, loose your weak hold; I'm come for vengeance!

Enter CARLOS.

Where is this youth? Where is the blooming rival, for whom I have been betrayed? Hold me not, base woman! In vain the stripling flies me; for, by heaven, my sword shall in his bosom write its master's wrongs!

[VICTORIA *first goes towards the Flat, then returns, takes off her Hat, and drops on one Knee.*

Vict. Strike, strike it here! Plunge it deep into that bosom, already wounded by a thousand stabs, keener and more painful than your sword can give. —Here lives all the gnawing anguish of love betrayed; here live the pangs of disappointed hopes, hopes sanctified by holiest vows, which have been written in the book of heaven.——Hah! he sinks. —[*She flies to him.*]—Oh! my Carlos! my beloved! my husband! forgive my too severe reproaches; thou art dear, yet dear as ever, to Victoria's heart!

Car. [*Recovering.*] Oh, you know not what you do—you know not what you are. Oh, Victoria, thou art a beggar!

Vict. No, we are rich, we are happy! See there, the fragments of that fatal deed, which, had I not

recovered, we had been indeed undone; yet still not wretched, could my Carlos think so!

Car. The fragments of the deed! the deed which that base woman——

Vict. Speak not so harshly.——To you, madam, I fear, I seem reprehensible; yet, when you consider my duties as a wife and mother, you will forgive me.——Be not afraid of poverty—a woman has deceived, but she will not desert you!

Laura. Is this real? Can I be awake?

Vict. Oh, may'st thou indeed awake to virtue!—You have talents that might grace the highest of our sex; be no longer unjust to such precious gifts, by burying them in dishonour.—Virtue is our first, most awful duty; bow, Laura! bow before her throne, and mourn in ceaseless tears, that ever you forgot her heavenly precepts!

Laura. So, by a smooth speech about virtue, you think to cover the injuries I sustain. Vile, insinuating monster!—but thou know'st me not.—Revenge is sweeter to my heart than love; and if there is a law in Spain to gratify that passion, your virtue shall have another field for exercise. [*Exit.*

Car. [*Turning towards* VICTORIA.] My hated rival and my charming wife! How many sweet mysteries have you to unfold?——Oh, Victoria! my soul thanks thee, but I dare not yet say I love thee, till ten thousand acts of watchful tenderness have proved how deep the sentiment's engraved.

Vict. Can it be true that I have been unhappy?—But the mysteries, my Carlos, are already explained to you—Gasper's resemblance to my uncle——

Gasp. Yes, sir, I was always apt at resemblances—In our plays at home, I am always Queen Cleopatra—You know she was but a gipsy queen, and I hits her off to a nicety.

Car. Come, my Victoria—oh, there is a painful pleasure in my bosom—To gaze on thee, to listen

to, and to love thee, seems like the bliss of angels' cheering whispers to repentant sinners.

[*Exeunt* CARLOS *and* VICTORIA.

Gasp. Lord help 'em! how easily the women are taken in! [*Exit.*

SCENE III.

The Prado.

Enter MINETTE.

Min. Ah, here comes the man at last, after I have been sauntering in sight of his lodgings these two hours.—Now, if my scheme takes, what a happy person shall I be! and sure, as I was Donna Olivia today, to please my lady, I may be Donna Olivia tonight, to please myself. I'll address him as the maid of a lady who has taken a fancy to him, then convey him to our house—then retire, and then come in again, and, with a vast deal of confusion, confess I sent my maid for him. If he should dislike my forwardness, the censure will fall on my lady; if he should be pleased with my person, the advantage will be mine. But perhaps he's come here on some wicked frolic or other.—I'll watch him at a distance before I speak. [*Exit.*

Enter DON JULIO.

Julio. Not here, 'faith; though she gave me last night but a faint refusal, and I had a right, by all the rules of gallantry, to construe that into an assent.—Then she's a jilt—Hang her, I feel I am uneasy—The first woman that ever gave me pain.—I am ashamed to perceive that this spot has attractions

for me, only because it was here I conversed with her. 'Twas here the little Syren, conscious of her charms, unveiled her fascinating face—'Twas here —Ha!

Enter DON GARCIA *and* DON VINCENTIO.

Gar. Ha! Don Julio!

Julio. Pshaw! gentlemen, pray be quick.

Gar. 'Twas here that Julio, leaving champaign untasted, and songs of gallantry unsung, came to talk to the whistling branches.

Vin. 'Twas here that Julio, flying from the young and gay, was found in doleful meditation—[*Altering his tone.*]—on a wench, for a hundred ducats!

Gar. Who is she?

Julio. Not Donna Olivia, gentlemen; not Donna Olivia.

Gar. We have been seeking you, to ask the event of your visit to her.

Julio. The event has proved that you have been most grossly duped.

Vin. I knew that—Ha! ha! ha!

Julio. And you likewise, I know that—Ha! ha! ha!——The fair lady, so far from being a vixen, is the very essence of gentleness. To me, so much sweetness in a wife would be downright maukish.

Vin. Well, but she's fond of a Jew's harp.

Julio. Detests it; she would be as fond of a Jew.

Gar. Pho, pho! this is a game at cross purposes; —let us all go to Don Cæsar's together, and compare opinions on the spot.

Julio. I'll go most willingly—but it will be only to cover you both with confusion, for being the two men in Spain most easily imposed on. [*All going.*

Enter MINETTE.

Min. Gentlemen, my lady has sent me for one of you, pray which of you is it?

Julio. [*Returning.*] Me, without doubt, child.

Vin. I don't know that.

Gar. Look at me, my dear; don't you think I am the man?

Min. Let me see—a good air, and well made—you are the man for a dancer. [*To* GARCIA.]—Well dressed, and nicely put out of hands—you are the man for a bandbox. [*To* VINCENTIO.]—Handsome and bold—you are the man for my lady.

[*To* JULIO.

Julio. My dear little Iris, here's all the gold in my pocket.—Gentlemen, I wish you a good night—I am your very obedient, humble—

[*Stalking by them, with his arm round* MINETTE.

Gar. Pho! pr'ythee, don't be a fool. Are we not going to Donna Olivia?

Julio. Donna Olivia must wait my dear boy; we can decide about her to-morrow. Come along, my little dove of Venus! [*Exit.*

Gar. What a rash fellow it is! ten to one but this is some common business, and he'll be robbed and murdered—they take him for a stranger.

Vin. Let's follow, and see where she leads him.

Gar. That's hardly fair: however, as I think there's danger, we will follow. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV.

DON CÆSAR'S.

Enter MINETTE *and* DON JULIO.

Min. Please to sit down till my lady is ready to wait on you—Sir, [illegible] he won't be long—I'm sure

Ga

she's out, and I may do great things before she returns. [*Aside.—Exit.*

Julio. Through fifty back lanes, a long garden, and a narrow staircase, into a superb apartment—all that's in the regular way; as the Spanish women manage it, one intrigue is too much like another. If it was not now and then for the little lively fillip of a jealous husband or brother, which obliges one to leap from a window, or crawl, like a cat, along the gutters, there would be no bearing the *ennui*. Ah! ah! but this promises novelty; [*Looking through the wing.*] a young girl and an old man—wife or daughter? They are coming this way. My lovely incognita, by all that's propitious! Why did not some kind spirit whisper to me my happiness? but hold—she can't mean to treat the old gentleman with a sight of me. [*Goes behind the sofa.*

Enter DON CÆSAR *and* OLIVIA.

Cæsar. No, no, madam, no going out.—There, madam, this is your apartment, your house, your garden, your assembly, till you go to your convent. Why, how impudent you are, to look thus unconcerned!—Can hardly forbear laughing in my face!—Very well—very well!

[*Exit, double locking the door.*

Oliv. Ha! ha! ha! I'll be even with you, my dear father, if you treble lock it. I'll stay here two days without once asking for my liberty, and you'll come the third, with tears in your eyes, to take me. He has forgot the door leading to the garden. I vow I'll stay, [*Sitting down.*] I can make pass pleasantly enough.

Julio. I hope so.

[*Looking over the*

Oliv. Heaven and earth!

Julio. My dear creature, w[illegible] am I here before you ex[illegible]

Oliv. Expected you!

Julio. Oh, this pretty surprise! Come, let us sit down; I think your father was very obliging to lock us in together.

Oliv. Sir! sir! my father! [*Calling at the door.*

Cæsar. [*Without.*] Ay, 'tis all in vain,—I won't come near you. There you are, and there you may stay.—I sha'n't return, make as much noise as you will.

Julio. Why, are you not ashamed that your father has so much more consideration for your guest than you have?

Oliv. My guest! how is it possible he can have discovered me? [*Aside.*

Julio. Pho! This is carrying the thing further than you need—if there was a third person here, it might be prudent.

Oliv. Why, this assurance, Don Julio, is really—

Julio. The thing in the world you are most ready to pardon?

Oliv. Upon my word, I don't know how to treat you.

Julio. Consult your heart!

Oliv. I shall consult my honour.

Julio. Honour is a pretty thing to play with, but when spoken with that very grave face, after having sent your maid to bring me here, is really more than I expected. I shall be in an ill humour presently—I won't stay if you treat me thus.

Oliv. Well, this is superior to every thing! I have heard that men will slander women privately to each
ommon amusement; but to do it to
l you really pretend that I sent for

! ha! Well, if it obliges you, I will
did not send for me; that your maid
me hither; nay, that I have not now
piness— [*Catching her in his arms.*

Enter MINETTE; *she screams, and runs out.*

Julio. Donna Olivia de Zuniga! how the devil came she here?

Oliv. [*Aside.*] That's lucky, Olivia, my dear friend, why do you run away? Keep the character, I charge you. [*Apart to* MINETTE.] Be still Olivia.

Min. Oh! dear madam! I was—I was so frightened when I saw that gentleman.

Oliv. Oh, my dear, it's the merriest pretty kind of gentleman in the world; he pretends that I sent my maid for him into the streets, ha! ha!

Jul. That's right; always tell a thing yourself, which you would not have believed.

Min. It is the readiest excuse for being found in a lady's apartment, however. Now will I swear I know nothing of the matter. [*Aside.*

Oliv. Now, I think it a horrid poor excuse; he has certainly not had occasion to invent reasons for such impertinencies often. Tell me that he has made love to you to-day. [*Apart.*

Min. I fancy that he has had occasion to excuse impertinencies often;——his impertinence to me to-day——

Julio. To you, madam?

Min. Making love to me, my dear, all the morning—could hardly get him away, he was so desirous to speak to my father. Nay, sir, I don't care for your impatience.

Julio. [*Aside.*] Now would I give a thousand pistoles if she were a man!

Oliv. Nay, then, this accidental meeting is fortunate—pray, Don Julio, don't let my presence prevent your saying what you think proper to my friend—shall I leave you together?

Julio. [*Apart.*] To contradict a lady on such an assertion would be too gross; but, upon my honour, Donna Olivia is the last woman upon earth who

could inspire me with a tender idea. Find an excuse to send her away, my angel, I entreat you. I have a thousand things to say, and the moments are too precious to be given to her.

Oliv. I think so too, but one can't be rude, you know. Come, my dear, sit down, [*Seating herself.*] have you brought your work?

Julio. The devil! what can she mean? [*Pushing himself between* MINETTE *and the sofa.*] Donna Olivia, I am sorry to inform you that my physician has just been sent for to your father, Don Cæsar.—The poor gentleman was seized with a vertigo.

Oliv. Vertigoes! Oh, he has them frequently, you know. [*To* MINETTE.

Min. Yes, and they always keep me from his sight.

Julio. Did ever one [illegible] prevent another from leaving her at such a n[illegible] before? I really, madam, cannot comprehend——

Cæsar. [*Without.*] It is impossible—impossible, gentlemen! Don Julio cannot be h[illegible]

Julio. Hah! who's that?

Enter DON CÆSAR, DON GARCIA, *and* DON VINCENTIO.

Gar. There! did we not tell you so? we saw him enter the garden.

Cæsar. What can be the meaning of all this? A man in my daughter's apartment!

[*Attempting to draw.*

Gar. Hold, sir! Don Julio is of the first rank in Spain, and will unquestionably be able to satisfy your honour, without troubling your sword.—We have done mischief, Vincentio! [*Apart.*

[illegible]LIVIA.] They have be[illegible]
[illegible] I'll bring you off, ne[illegible]
[illegible]ion for your busy frie[illegible]
[illegible]sfy me then in a mom[illegible]

Julio. I came here, sir, by the merest accident.—The garden door was open, curiosity led me to this apartment.—You came in a moment after, and very civilly locked me in with your daughter.

Cæsar. Locked you in! why, then, did you not, like a man of honour, cry out?

Julio. The lady cried out, sir, and you told her you would not return; but when Donna Olivia de Zuniga entered, for whom I have conceived a most violent passion——

Cæsar. A passion for her! Oh, let me hear no more on't.—A passion for her! You may as well entertain a passion for the untameable hyæna.

Gar. There, Vincentio, what think you now? Xantippe or not?

Vin. I am afraid I must give up that—but, pray, support me as to this point, Don Cæsar; is not the lady fond of a Jew's harp!

Cæsar. Fond! she's fond of nothing, but playing the vixen; there is not such a fury upon earth!

Julio. These are odd liberties, with a person who does not belong to him.

Cæsar. I'll play the hypocrite for her no more; the world shall know her true character, they shall know——but ask her maid there.

Julio. Her maid!

Min. Why, yes, sir; to say the truth, I am but Donna Olivia's maid after all.

Oliv. [*Apart.*] Dear Minette! speak for me, or I am now ruined.

Min. I will, ma'am.—I must confess, sir, [*Going up to* JULIO.] there never was so bitter a tempered [illegible] rne her humours by, night and by *atiently.*] I will, sure, that if you ery hour the firs



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